

METHODS AND SYSTEMS OF ADJUSTING TILT USING MAGNETIC ERASE WIDTH FEEDBACK

BACKGROUND

[0001] Magnetic storage devices such as hard disk drives use magnetic media to store data and a movable slider having magnetic transducers (e.g., read/write heads) positioned over the magnetic media to selectively read data from and write data to the magnetic media. Electronic lapping guides (ELGs) are used for precisely controlling a degree of lapping applied to an air bearing surface (ABS) of the sliders for achieving a particular stripe height, or distance from the ABS, for the magnetic transducers located on the sliders. U.S. Patent No. 8,165,709 to Rudy and U.S. Patent No. 8,151,441 to Rudy et al., which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety, provide a comprehensive description of ELGs used in manufacturing sliders for hard disk drives.

[0002] As the design of magnetic transducers becomes more and more intricate, their fabrication processes become increasingly complex as well. Such complex fabrication processes inherently include some imperfections that ultimately manifest as undesirable variations in the final product. By observing certain performance parameters of the final product (e.g., sliders including one or more magnetic transducers), these undesirable variations can be measured and quantified. A system and method for reducing or eliminating these undesirable variations in the performance of magnetic transducers is therefore needed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which:

[0004] Figures 1A and 1B illustrate an example of a conventional magnetic disk drive in which a magnetic read element manufactured in accordance with various embodiments may be utilized;

[0005] Figure 1C illustrates an example of a conventional read/write head.

[0006] Figure 2 is an operational flow chart illustrating a conventional process for manufacturing a magnetic read element;

[0007] Figure 3 is an operational flow chart illustrating a process for manufacturing a magnetic read element in accordance with various embodiments;

[0008] Figure 4 illustrates a sequence of views during an example method of processing a wafer in accordance with various embodiments; and

[0009] Figure 5 illustrates an example computing module that may be used to implement various features of various embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] As described above, magnetic storage devices such as hard disk drives use magnetic media to store data and a movable slider having magnetic transducers positioned over the magnetic media to selectively read data from and write data to the magnetic media. The movable slider and magnetic transducers may be a sub-component of a head gimbal assembly (HGA). The magnetic transducer typically comprises a magneto-resistive read element (e.g., a so-called giant magneto-resistive read element, or a tunneling magneto-resistive read element) and an inductive write structure comprising a flat coil deposited by photolithography and a yoke structure having pole tips that face a disk media.

[0011] Figures 1A and 1B illustrate an example magnetic disk drive 10 that can include a sealed enclosure 12, a disk drive motor 14, a magnetic disk 16, supported for rotation by a spindle S1 of motor 14, an actuator 18 and an arm 20 attached to a spindle S2 of actuator 18. Suspension 22 is coupled at one end to arm 20, and at its other end to a read/write head or transducer 24. Transducer 24 typically includes an inductive write element with a magneto-resistive read element (shown in FIG. 1C). As motor 14 rotates magnetic disk 16, as indicated by the arrow R, an air bearing is formed under transducer 24 causing it to lift slightly off of the surface of magnetic disk 16, or, as it is termed in the art, to "fly" above magnetic disk 16. Various magnetic "tracks" of information can be read from magnetic disk 16 as actuator 18 causes transducer 24 to pivot in a short arc as indicated by arrows P.

[0012] Figure 1C illustrates a magnetic read/write head 30 including a write element 32 and read element 34. The edges of write element 32 and read element 34 also define an ABS in a plane 33, which flies above the surface of the magnetic disk 16 during operation.

[0013] Read element 34 includes a first shield 44, an intermediate layer 38 which serves as a second shield, and a read sensor 46 located between the first shield 44 and the intermediate layer 38. Read sensor 46 has a particular stripe height and a particular location

between the first shield 44 and the second shield 38, both of which are chosen to attain particular read performance. Control of stripe height is important in controlling device resistance, device output amplitude, device bias point and consequently many related measures of performance. Magneto-resistive sensors can be used with a variety of stripe heights, with a typical stripe height being smaller than about 2 microns, including much less than 1 micron. Further, although read sensor 46 is shown in Figure 1C as a shielded single-element vertical read sensor, read element 34 can take a variety of forms as is known to those skilled in the art, such as unshielded read sensors.

[0014] Write element 32 is typically an inductive write element including the intermediate layer 38 which serves as a first yoke element or pole, and a second yoke element or pole 36, defining a write gap 40 therebetween. First yoke element 38 and second yoke element 36 are configured and arranged relative to each other such that the write gap 40 has a particular nose length, NL. Also included in write element 32, is a conductive coil 42 that is positioned within a dielectric medium 43. As is well known to those skilled in the art, these elements operate to magnetically write data on a magnetic medium such as a magnetic disk 16.

[0015] Magneto-resistive devices utilized in the aforementioned magneto-resistive read elements can be manufactured by depositing a plurality of rows of magnetic transducers on a wafer (substrate). The wafer may then be diced/cut into bars of active device regions for incorporation into a magnetic recording head. Subsequent to the dicing/cutting process, the resulting bars are subjected to a lapping process to reduce the stripe heights of the magneto-resistive devices to a desired height, and to smooth or polish the surface of the structure.

[0016] Stripe height can determine the sensitivity of the magneto-resistive device to a magnetic field, where a reduction in stripe height may produce a more sensitive magneto-resistive device. As magnetic recording density increases, scaled down magneto-resistive devices, e.g., giant magneto-resistive devices, are used to achieve adequate signal output, and as magneto-resistive devices scale down, stripe height scales down accordingly.

[0017] Figure 2 illustrates an example conventional process for manufacturing a magnetic read element. At operation 200, a wafer is ground and sliced. During operation 200, the bars are cut at a 90 degree angle. At operation 202, the bars of a first section are divided. At operation 204, a lapping process is performed to obtain an angle for improving the magnetic performance of the resulting magnetic heads. At operation 206, slider fabrication and HGA

processing is performed on the bars of the first section. At operation 208, magnetic erase width (MEW) feedback is received, where the MEW feedback includes/corresponds to a desired ABS tilt angle that should be applied to the bars. MEW can refer a measurement which involves the direct measurement of magnetic erasure. That is, MEW may be a measure of recording field bubble footprint width, and therefore, a good indicator of the magnetic transducer performance. At operation 210, another lapping process is performed on bars of the remaining sections (of the wafer) based on the desired ABS tilt angle. At operation 212, slider fabrication and HGA processing is performed on the bars of the remaining sections.

[0018] Using the conventional manufacturing process of Figure 2, it can be appreciated that the desired ABS tilt angle is applied during subsequent lapping processes. However, the amount of tilt that can be applied is limited to approximately -0.15 deg to + 0.20 deg. This cannot account for sections of the wafer (in some cases, up to approximately 15% of the wafer) that may require upwards of, e.g., +/- 0.4 deg of tilt to achieve optimum optical performance.

[0019] Accordingly, systems and methods are provided for reducing or eliminating undesirable variations in the performance of magnetic transducers. In particular, systems and methods adjust ABS tilt using MEW feedback from processing a sample/subset of row bars from at least one bar section of a wafer.

[0020] Figure 3 illustrates an example process for manufacturing a magnetic read element in accordance with various embodiments. At operation 300, a wafer is sliced and divided into bar sections. At operation 302, a subset of bars of a bar section (of the plurality of bar sections) are ground and sliced. It should be noted that this grinding and slicing process is performed at a 90 deg angle. In accordance with one embodiment, the subset of bars that are ground and sliced comprise 3 bars, a “top” bar, a “middle” bar, and a “bottom” bar of the bar section. At operation 304, slider fabrication and HGA processing is performed on the subset of bars of the bar section. At operation 308, MEW is obtained from the subset of bars (based on the performance of the slider fabrication and HGA processing), and an ABS angle tilt is determined based on the MEW. In other words, MEW feedback is received, where the MEW feedback includes/corresponds to a desired ABS tilt angle that should be applied to the bars. At operation 310, the remaining bars of the bar section are ground and sliced based on the ABS tilt angle. At operation 312, another lapping process is performed

on the remaining bars, and at operation 314, slider fabrication and HGA processing is performed on the remaining bars. Subjecting the remaining bars of the bar section to this subsequent lapping process allows for fine-tuning of ABS perpendicularity. Subsequent to operation 314, the method of Figure 3 may repeat, where another subset of bars of another bar section is ground and sliced per operation 302. Operations 304-314 may also be repeated until the bars of all the remaining bar sections have been processed.

[0021] It can be appreciated that processing the subset of bars of a particular bar section of the wafer allows for improved optimization with regard to applying an ABS tilt angle for optimum magnetic performance. That is, instead of applying the same ABS tilt angle to all the bar sections of wafer (as would be the case with the conventional manufacturing process of Figure 2), MEW feedback can be received to account for the nuances/variations of the wafer at different sections, such that an appropriate ABS tilt angle can be applied (up to, for example, ± 0.5 deg) if needed at the slicing and grinding stage and fine-tuned with a lapping process. Accordingly, manufacturing a slider in accordance with various embodiments is no longer limited to ABS tilt angle adjustment of merely -0.15 deg to $+0.20$ deg that is achieved with lapping alone.

[0022] In accordance with another embodiment, the grinding and slicing of multiple subsets of bars from multiple bar sections can be performed rather than undergoing the aforementioned repetitive process to capture MEW feedback from multiple bar sections. Hence, the variations of a wafer may still be accounted for to optimize ABS tilt angle.

[0023] Figure 4 illustrates a sequence of views during a method of processing an example wafer 400, where wafer 400 can be sliced and divided into a plurality of bar sections in accordance with various embodiments. A bar section, as described herein, may include “top” and “bottom” bar sections, “edge” bar sections, and “middle” bar sections. For example the top bar section may include a bar section comprising areas 1_T and 2_T, while the bottom bar section may include a bar section comprising areas 3_T and 4_T. The edge bar sections may include bar sections comprising the following areas: 1_E and 2_E; 3_E and 4_E; 5_E and 6_E; 7_E and 8_E; 9_E and 10_E; 11_E and 12_E; 13_E and 14_E; 15_E and 16_E; 17_E and 18_E; 19_E and 20_E; 21_E and 22_E; 23_E and 24_E; 25_E and 26_E; 27_E and 28_E; 29_E and 30_E; 31_E and 32_E; 33_E and 34_E; and 35_E and 36_E. The middle bar sections may include bar sections comprising the following areas: 1_M and 2_M; 3_M and 4_M; 5_M and 6_M; 7_M and 8_M; and 9_M and 10_M. In this example, a wafer may have

25 bar sections, and each bar section can be indicative of a finger print. Different bar sections may have different fingerprint/overlay characteristics.

[0024] As can be appreciated, top, bottom, and edge bar sections may have areas that have an “abnormal” MEW profile, whereas middle bar sections may be considered to be relatively flat, or at least have a “constant” MEW profile. That is, a single/constant ABS tilt angle may applied to any of the bars of the middle bar sections to achieve optimum magnetic performance. However, those sections having the abnormal MEW profile may require different ABS tilt angles to be applied. For example, the top and bottom bar sections may have an abnormal MEW profile across both areas of the respective bars. The edge bar sections may have either a left or right area (that coincides with an edge of the wafer) that may have an abnormal MEW profile.

[0025] In particular, considering one edge bar section that includes areas 13_E and 14_E, area 13_E may coincide with an edge of wafer 400 that can result in area 13_E having an abnormal MEW profile. Accordingly, to achieve optimum magnetic performance, it would not be desirable to apply the ABS tilt angle that would be applicable to a middle bar section including areas 1_M and 2_M to the edge bar section including areas 13_E and 14_E. Rather, and in accordance with various embodiments, MEW feedback may be received relative to a subset of bars of one or more bar sections of a wafer to arrive at a preferred or desirable ABS tilt angle for the one or more bar sections of the wafer.

[0026] In the example illustrated in Figure 4, operation 410 may involve extracting at least one subset of bars from at least one bar section of wafer 400. The at least one subset of bars may include bars ground and sliced from the top, middle, and bottom of a bar section (in this example, the top, middle, and bottom bars from the bar section including areas 13_E and 14_E). The at least one subset of bars are extracted in order to obtain a magnetic performance of the at least one subset of bars and determine an angle based on the magnetic performance at operation 420. That is, a representative sampling of the MEW profile may be obtained for multiple bar sections (rather than a single MEW profile from a single bar section that is applied to an entire wafer). It should be noted that in accordance with other embodiments, the at least one subset of bars may be bars obtained from other portions of a bar section, and can include more or less bars of the bar section. Based on the MEW feedback associated with the bars, the remaining bars of the at least one bar section may be processed at operation 430 based on the determined angle. In various embodiments,

subsequent to extracting at least one subset of bars from at least one bar section, the remainder of the wafer may be stored for a period of time (e.g., 7-10 days).

[0027] Various embodiments can provide improved MEW average and sigma difference by eliminating tilt limitations at the lapping process in convention systems and methods. Additionally, HGA-level pitch static attitude (PSA) can be achieved as well as consistent rough lapping times. It should be noted that the ABS tilt angle accuracy and targeting may be further improved by utilizing a wedge detector.

[0028] In various embodiments, the processes described herein can be executed on one or more computers having a processor, memory, and other such components that are well known in the art for, e.g., controlling or directing the slicing and dividing of a wafer, selection of a bar section as well as selection of a subset of bars of the bar section, lapping, and other fabrication and processing, receiving MEW feedback, and applying information gleaned from such feedback in further fabrication and/or processing. In one embodiment, the processes can perform the sequence of actions in a different order. In another embodiment, the processes can skip one or more of the actions. In other embodiments, one or more of the actions are performed simultaneously. In some embodiments, additional actions can be performed.

[0029] Figure 5 illustrates an example computing module that may be used to implement various features of the system and methods disclosed herein.

[0030] As used herein, the term module might describe a given unit of functionality that can be performed in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present application. As used herein, a module might be implemented utilizing any form of hardware, software, or a combination thereof. For example, one or more processors, controllers, ASICs, PLAs, PALs, CPLDs, FPGAs, logical components, software routines or other mechanisms might be implemented to make up a module. In implementation, the various modules described herein might be implemented as discrete modules or the functions and features described can be shared in part or in total among one or more modules. In other words, as would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art after reading this description, the various features and functionality described herein may be implemented in any given application and can be implemented in one or more separate or shared modules in various combinations and permutations. Even though various features or elements of functionality may be individually described or claimed as separate modules, one of ordinary skill in the art will understand that

these features and functionality can be shared among one or more common software and hardware elements, and such description shall not require or imply that separate hardware or software components are used to implement such features or functionality.

[0031] Where components or modules of the application are implemented in whole or in part using software, in one embodiment, these software elements can be implemented to operate with a computing or processing module capable of carrying out the functionality described with respect thereto. One such example computing module is shown in Figure 5. Various embodiments are described in terms of this example-computing module 500. After reading this description, it will become apparent to a person skilled in the relevant art how to implement the application using other computing modules or architectures.

[0032] Referring now to Figure 5, computing module 500 may represent, for example, computing or processing capabilities found within desktop, laptop, notebook, and tablet computers; hand-held computing devices (tablets, PDA's, smart phones, cell phones, palmtops, etc.); mainframes, supercomputers, workstations or servers; or any other type of special-purpose or general-purpose computing devices as may be desirable or appropriate for a given application or environment. Computing module 500 might also represent computing capabilities embedded within or otherwise available to a given device. For example, a computing module might be found in other electronic devices such as, for example, digital cameras, navigation systems, cellular telephones, portable computing devices, modems, routers, WAPs, terminals and other electronic devices that might include some form of processing capability.

[0033] Computing module 500 might include, for example, one or more processors, controllers, control modules, or other processing devices, such as a processor 504. Processor 504 might be implemented using a general-purpose or special-purpose processing engine such as, for example, a microprocessor, controller, or other control logic. In the illustrated example, processor 504 is connected to a bus 502, although any communication medium can be used to facilitate interaction with other components of computing module 500 or to communicate externally.

[0034] Computing module 500 might also include one or more memory modules, simply referred to herein as main memory 508. For example, preferably random access memory (RAM) or other dynamic memory might be used for storing information and instructions to be executed by processor 504. Main memory 508 might also be used for storing temporary

variables or other intermediate information during execution of instructions to be executed by processor 504. Computing module 500 might likewise include a read only memory (“ROM”) or other static storage device coupled to bus 502 for storing static information and instructions for processor 504.

[0035] The computing module 500 might also include one or more various forms of information storage mechanism 510, which might include, for example, a media drive 512 and a storage unit interface 520. The media drive 512 might include a drive or other mechanism to support fixed or removable storage media 514. For example, a hard disk drive, a floppy disk drive, a magnetic tape drive, an optical disk drive, a CD or DVD drive (R or RW), or other removable or fixed media drive might be provided. Accordingly, storage media 514 might include, for example, a hard disk, a floppy disk, magnetic tape, cartridge, optical disk, a CD or DVD, or other fixed or removable medium that is read by, written to or accessed by media drive 512. As these examples illustrate, the storage media 514 can include a computer usable storage medium having stored therein computer software or data.

[0036] In alternative embodiments, information storage mechanism 510 might include other similar instrumentalities for allowing computer programs or other instructions or data to be loaded into computing module 500. Such instrumentalities might include, for example, a fixed or removable storage unit 522 and an interface 520. Examples of such storage units 522 and interfaces 520 can include a program cartridge and cartridge interface, a removable memory (for example, a flash memory or other removable memory module) and memory slot, a PCMCIA slot and card, and other fixed or removable storage units 522 and interfaces 520 that allow software and data to be transferred from the storage unit 522 to computing module 500.

[0037] Computing module 500 might also include a communications interface 524. Communications interface 524 might be used to allow software and data to be transferred between computing module 500 and external devices. Examples of communications interface 524 might include a modem or softmodem, a network interface (such as an Ethernet, network interface card, WiMedia, IEEE 802.XX or other interface), a communications port (such as for example, a USB port, IR port, RS232 port Bluetooth® interface, or other port), or other communications interface. Software and data transferred via communications interface 524 might typically be carried on signals, which can be electronic, electromagnetic (which includes optical) or other signals capable of being exchanged by a given

communications interface 524. These signals might be provided to communications interface 524 via a channel 528. This channel 528 might carry signals and might be implemented using a wired or wireless communication medium. Some examples of a channel might include a phone line, a cellular link, an RF link, an optical link, a network interface, a local or wide area network, and other wired or wireless communications channels.

[0038] In this document, the terms "computer program medium" and "computer usable medium" are used to generally refer to transitory or non-transitory media such as, for example, memory 508, storage unit 520, media 514, and channel 528. These and other various forms of computer program media or computer usable media may be involved in carrying one or more sequences of one or more instructions to a processing device for execution. Such instructions embodied on the medium, are generally referred to as "computer program code" or a "computer program product" (which may be grouped in the form of computer programs or other groupings). When executed, such instructions might enable the computing module 500 to perform features or functions of the present application as discussed herein.

[0039] Although described above in terms of various exemplary embodiments and implementations, it should be understood that the various features, aspects and functionality described in one or more of the individual embodiments are not limited in their applicability to the particular embodiment with which they are described, but instead can be applied, alone or in various combinations, to one or more of the other embodiments of the application, whether or not such embodiments are described and whether or not such features are presented as being a part of a described embodiment. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present application should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments.

[0040] Terms and phrases used in this document, and variations thereof, unless otherwise expressly stated, should be construed as open ended as opposed to limiting. As examples of the foregoing: the term "including" should be read as meaning "including, without limitation" or the like; the term "example" is used to provide exemplary instances of the item in discussion, not an exhaustive or limiting list thereof; the terms "a" or "an" should be read as meaning "at least one," "one or more" or the like; and adjectives such as "conventional," "traditional," "normal," "standard," "known" and terms of similar meaning should not be construed as limiting the item described to a given time period or to an item available as of a

given time, but instead should be read to encompass conventional, traditional, normal, or standard technologies that may be available or known now or at any time in the future. Likewise, where this document refers to technologies that would be apparent or known to one of ordinary skill in the art, such technologies encompass those apparent or known to the skilled artisan now or at any time in the future.

[0041] The presence of broadening words and phrases such as “one or more,” “at least,” “but not limited to” or other like phrases in some instances shall not be read to mean that the narrower case is intended or required in instances where such broadening phrases may be absent. The use of the term “module” does not imply that the components or functionality described or claimed as part of the module are all configured in a common package. Indeed, any or all of the various components of a module, whether control logic or other components, can be combined in a single package or separately maintained and can further be distributed in multiple groupings or packages or across multiple locations.

[0042] Additionally, the various embodiments set forth herein are described in terms of exemplary block diagrams, flow charts and other illustrations. As will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art after reading this document, the illustrated embodiments and their various alternatives can be implemented without confinement to the illustrated examples. For example, block diagrams and their accompanying description should not be construed as mandating a particular architecture or configuration.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a magneto-resistive device, comprising:
extracting at least one subset of bars from at least one bar section of a wafer;
obtaining a magnetic performance of the at least one subset of the bars;
determining an angle based on the magnetic performance; and
processing remaining bars from the at least one bar section of the wafer based on the determined angle.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one subset of bars extracted from the at least one bar section of the wafer comprise a top bar extracted from a top portion of the at least one bar section, a middle bar extracted from a middle portion of the at least one bar section, and a bottom bar extracted from a bottom portion of the at least one bar section.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein obtaining the magnetic performance comprises determining a magnetic erase width profile of the at least one subset of bars.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the determined angle comprises an air bearing surface (ABS) tilt angle optimizing magnetic performance of the magneto-resistive device.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the magneto-resistive device comprises a magnetic read head.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the determined angle comprises a 90 degree angle having a variance up to +/- 0.5 degrees.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the processing of the remaining bars comprises grinding and slicing the remaining bars at the determined angle.
8. The method of claim of claim 7, wherein the processing of the remaining bars further comprises subjecting the remaining bars to a lapping process to fine-tune an ABS perpendicularity of the remaining bars.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the magneto-resistive device comprises a magnetic read head.
10. A method of manufacturing a magnetic device, comprising:
slicing and dividing a wafer into bar sections;
grinding and slicing a subset of bars of a bar section;

obtaining magnetic erase width (MEW) of the subset of bars, and determining an air bearing surface (ABS) tilt angle based on the (MEW); and

grinding and slicing remaining bars of the bar section based on the ABS tilt angle.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising performing a first lapping process subsequent to the grinding and slicing of the subset of bars.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising performing a second lapping process subsequent to the grinding and slicing of the remaining bars.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising performing first and second slider fabrication and head gimbal assembly (HGA) processing subsequent to the grinding and slicing of the subset of bars and the grinding and slicing of the remaining bars, respectively, to obtain the MEW of the subset of bars.

14. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

grinding and slicing additional subsets of bars for additional bar sections;

obtaining additional MEWs of the additional subsets of bars, and determining additional ABS tilt angles based on the additional MEWs of the additional subsets of bars; and

grinding and slicing remaining bars of the additional bar section based on the additional ABS tilt angles determined for each of the additional bar sections.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein dividing the wafer into bar sections comprises sorting the bar sections into a top bar section, a bottom bar section, edge bar sections, and middle bar sections.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the additional ABS tilt angles comprises a plurality of ABS tilt angles determined for bars of the top bar section, bars of the bottom bar section, bars of the edge bar sections, and bars of the middle bar sections.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the subset of bars comprise a top bar, a middle bar, and a bottom bar extracted from one of the top bar section, the bottom bar section, the edge bar sections, and the middle bar sections.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the additional subsets of bars comprise respective top bars, middle bars, and bottom bars extracted from respective ones of the top bar section, the bottom bar section, the edge bar sections, and the middle bar sections.

19. The method of claim 9, wherein the ABS tilt angle comprises a 90 degree angle having a variance up to +/- 0.5 degrees.

20. The method of claim 9, wherein the magnetic device comprises a magnetic read head.