

ICEBREAKER FOR OPERATION PREFERABLY IN SHALLOW FREEZING WATER

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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The invention relates to shipbuilding, and more specifically – to icebreakers and tugboats intended for operation in ice in shallow water conditions.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

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The main problem of operation in ice-covered shallow water conditions is to provide the ship with required effective thrust to overcome ice resistance at limited draft, which is the reason for limiting the diameter of propellers and the power they effectively consume.

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Limitation of power consumed by the propulsor with specified diameter exists even at deep immersion. This is due to power limit because of severe cavitation onset at fixed propeller diameter resulting in sudden thrust breakdown and significant increase in unsteady hydrodynamic forces and vibration. In view of the requirement to obtain maximum possible propulsive thrust in order to achieve the highest icegoing capability almost every icebreaker is subject to the 1st stage of cavitation that still does not cause thrust breakdown. At smaller draft, the cavitation intensifies due to propeller diameter restrictions and closer to the free surface operation, as well as extra risk of air penetration to the propeller (aeration).

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Prior art discloses shallow-draft icebreaker (“Captain Evdokimov” type) for operation in shallow waters fitted with four conventional propellers mounted on the shafts symmetrically to ship’s centerline (CL) (two propellers on each side) and two

rudders located behind the central propellers presenting together a steering/propulsion system placed at stern overhang of the ship.

In this case, tips of propeller blades do not protrude beyond the base plane in height and the design waterline (DWL) in width at the given propeller locations.

5 However, the steering/propulsion system of the existing icebreaker does not ensure sufficient maneuverability of the ship to perform ice operations in constrained environment, especially during operations in the vicinity of offshore oil and gas facilities. Its aft end is not suitable for long-term icebreaking astern, the rudders affect astern ice performance of ship and often suffer damage; moreover, the propellers are poorly
10 protected against ice loads.

Such ship is not stable on course and less controllable in astern running mode. In addition, in some operating modes of propulsors there is a possibility of air penetration to
15 the propellers.

3. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The proposed invention is aimed to improve maneuverability of the ship running both ahead and astern in constrained environment in ice and in open water, as well as to improve its icegoing capabilities and to effectively handle air penetration to the operating podded AZT propellers and ship propulsors.

25 For this purpose the icebreaker intended for operation preferably in shallow freezing waters comprising a hull with a sled-like stern overhang, having flat bottom and ice protection shield along the perimeter of the overhang, and podded propulsion system disposed in the overhang and comprising two side propulsors mounted on the shafts

symmetrically to the ship's CL, and arranged with regard to hull height so that the propulsor's tip edges do not protrude beyond the ship's base plane and design waterline at the propellers' location, and, *according to the invention*, is fitted with two 360-degree azimuth thrusters (AZT) equipped with pulling propellers mounted on the AZT shafts in front of their pods with blade tip edges not protruding beyond the base plane and arranged symmetrically to the ship's CL displaced sternward, in such a way that the distance between the disks of AZT propellers and disks of side propulsors is not greater than the diameter of propulsor and the 360-degree turn of azimuth thruster about its axes with no contact to ship's propulsors is provided. In DWL area, the ship's stern overhang is of wedge-type icebreaking shape with 90° - 180° wedge angle along the DWL with its surface being inclined at no less than 30° to the vertical. An ice protection shield with wedge-shape cross section does not protrude beyond the ship's hull and is formed so as to extend in the bow direction beyond the disks plane of ship's side propulsors by the distance not greater than two diameters of the above-mentioned propulsors. Moreover, it has height at which the lower edge of the shield in the stern protrudes upwards from the rotation axes of AZT propellers at least by half the radius of these propellers.

Fitting the icebreaker with 360-degree azimuth thrusters results in improved maneuverability of the ship at the same effective power ensuring course keeping stability and controllability at astern running.

Installation of conventional propulsors at the sides of the icebreaker and the 360-degree azimuth thrusters – in the vicinity of ship's CL provides improved operating conditions for azimuth thrusters by protecting the same against possible contact with large-size ice features with the side propulsors rotating outboard and pushing away the major part of ice broken by the ship's hull.

The arrangement of AZT propellers and disks of ship propulsors so that the distance between them is not greater than one diameter of ship propulsor, makes it possible to minimize the effect of unsteady hydrodynamic forces from side propulsors' slipstreams acting on azimuth thruster.

5 Azimuth thruster fitted with pulling propellers provides the improvement in icebreaking capabilities of the ship especially at astern running and protects the AZT struts against damage.

Icebreaking shape of wedge-type stern hangout with the surface inclined at an angle of no less than 30° to the vertical contributes to breaking of ice by bending,
10 pushing aside and submerging of ice segments at astern running, therefore, the icegoing capabilities of the ship at astern running improve.

Ice protection shield with wedge-shaped cross-section arranged in a way that it does not protrude beyond the ship's hull at all waterlines and extends in the bow direction beyond propulsors' disks more effectively prevents aeration (air penetration)
15 occurrence and contributes to ice breaking.

The lower edge of the shield protruding upwards from the axes of AZT propellers by no less than half the radius of these propellers makes it possible to minimize the decrease in AZT propulsion performance caused by propulsors' slipstreams hitting the shield.

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4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The essence of the proposed invention is illustrated with drawings, where:

- Fig.1 – schematic representation of proposed icebreaker intended for operation in shallow freezing water;
- 25 – Fig.2 - view to the ship of Fig.1 from the stern;
- Fig.3 - view to the ship of Fig.1 from the bottom.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

The icebreaker (Fig.1, 2, 3) has the hull 1 with stern hangout 2 fitted with ice protection shield 3, steering/propulsion system placed in the stern hangout 2 and comprised of two conventional side ship propulsors 4 mounted on the shafts 5 and two 360-degree azimuth thrusters 6 with propellers 7 installed on the ship's hull 1.

The stern hangout 2 is of wedged shape with wedge angle θ along the DWL $90^\circ \leq \theta \leq 180^\circ$ (Fig.3) and the surface inclined at an angle $\alpha \geq 30^\circ$ to the vertical (Fig.1).

The ice protection shield 3 has such a height at the stern that the distance h between the lower edge of the shield 3 and axis of rotation of propeller 7 of AZT 6 (Fig.1, 2) is not greater than half the radius (a quarter of diameter D_2) of propeller 7 of the AZT 6 (Fig.3). In this case the shield is placed so as to extend in the bow direction beyond the disks of ship propulsors 4 by the distance L_1 which is not greater than two diameters D_1 of ship propulsors 4 (Fig.1).

AZT units 6 are arranged symmetrically to the ship's CL displaced sternward by L_2 providing free 360-degree turn of ship's AZT 6 around its vertical axes 8 with no contact to both propulsors 4 of the ship. Moreover, the distance between the disks of AZT 6 propellers 7 and the ship propulsors 4 is not greater than the diameter D_1 of ship propulsors 4 (Fig.3).

In this case ship propulsors 4 and AZT 6 propellers 7 are arranged with regard to hull height so that the tip edges of all propulsors 4, 7 do not protrude beyond the ship's base plane 9 (Fig.1).

6. INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

Principles of operation in shallow freezing water for the proposed icebreaker are described below.

5 When the icebreaker is running ahead in the ice field, the broken ice segments are submerged by the ship's hull 1 and form so called "ice shirt" on the surface of ship's hull. Moving along the sides and bottom of the ship the blocks of ice rise to the surface in stern area mainly from the sides. In this case, large-size ice pieces of "ice shirt" come up against conventional side propulsors 4 of the ship, which are rotating and milling the ice
10 blocks pushing the majority of ice pieces away from AZT 6 located in the vicinity of ship's CL. As the result, the number of ice blocks coming to AZT 6 is reduced several times; in addition, after being milled and broken the ice blocks have smaller mass, that leads to reduction of ice loads on AZT 6, resulting in improved operational reliability thereof. In this case, the ice protection shield 3 protects side propulsors 4 of the ship and
15 AZT 6 propellers 7 against the ice around the ship at maneuvering, and prevents air penetration to ship propulsors 4 and propellers 7 of AZT 6.

 When the icebreaker is running astern in the ice field, the ice is broken by bending due to optimized shape of ship's aft end; this leads to reduction of power consumption for ice breaking, while the segments of ice are pushed apart and some of
20 them are milled by pulling propellers 7 of AZT 6 at the stern hangout and pushed away beyond the hull 1 and side propulsors 4 of the ship mounted on the shafts 5. As the result, the ice is not gathering at the stern and the ship is running stable. In this case, the ice protection shield 3 efficiently breaks the ice and prevents aeration at AZT 6 propellers 7 and ship propulsors 4.

The proposed icebreaker intended for operation in shallow freezing waters offers improvement in maneuverability and icegoing capabilities when running both ahead and astern comparing preferably with prototype.

CLAIMS

1. The icebreaker intended for operation preferably in shallow freezing water comprising a hull
5 with sled-like stern overhang and having flat bottom and ice protection shield along the
perimeter of the overhang, and steering/ propulsion system disposed in the overhang and
comprising two side propulsors mounted on the shafts symmetrically to the ship's CL, and
arranged with regard to hull height so that the propulsor's tip edges do not protrude beyond
the ship's base plane and design waterline at the propellers' location, *characterized in that* it
10 is fitted with two 360-degree azimuth thrusters (AZT) equipped with pulling propellers
mounted on the AZT shafts in front of their pods with blade tip edges not protruding beyond
the base plane and arranged symmetrically to the ship's CL displaced sternward, in such a
way that the distance between the disks of AZT propellers and disks of side propulsors is
not greater than the diameter of these propulsors and the 360-degree turn of azimuth thruster
15 about its axes with no contact to ship's propulsors is provided, while the ship's stern
overhang in DWL area is of wedge-type icebreaking shape with 90° - 180° wedge angle
along the DWL and with its surface being inclined at no less than 30° to the vertical, and the
ice protection shield with wedge-shape cross section does not protrude beyond the ship's
hull and is formed so as to extend in the bow direction beyond the disks plane of ship's side
20 propulsors by the distance not greater than two diameters of the above-mentioned
propulsors, and it has height at which the lower edge of the shield in the stern protrudes
upwards from the rotation axes of AZT propellers at least by half the radius of these
propellers.