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HIGHLY DIRECTIVE UNDERWATER ACOUSTIC RECEIVER

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN THAT (1) BENJAMIN A. CRAY AND (2) VICTOR F. EVORA, employees of the United States Government, citizens of the United States of America and residents of (1) West Kingston, County of Washington, State of Rhode Island, and (2) Narragansett, County of Washington, State of Rhode Island have invented certain new and useful improvements entitled as set forth above of which the following is a specification.

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HIGHLY DIRECTIVE UNDERWATER ACOUSTIC RECEIVER

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST

The invention described herein may be manufactured and used by or for the Government of the United States of America for governmental purposes without the payment of any royalties thereon or therefor.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(1) Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to underwater acoustic receiving sensors and, more specifically, to an underwater acoustic receiving sensor that measures the pressure, acoustic particle velocity, and the three gradients of acoustic particle velocity in such a manner as to improve the directivity of the underwater acoustic receiving sensor.

(2) Description of the Prior Art

Pressure sensors, or hydrophones, are commonly used to detect sound underwater. These sensors are omni-directional and can not distinguish the arrival direction of a sound source. Pressure sensors are often configured into an array of sensors, and the array then provides a means to estimate the source location. Better angular resolution is obtained by larger arrays of pressure sensors.

In the early 1990's, new types of underwater acoustic receiving sensors were considered for sonar applications. Conventional underwater acoustic sensors measure acoustic pressure and are omni-directional. That means, the response of the traditional sensor is uniform in all directions. It is desired to have a non-uniform, or directional sensor, that can look in a given direction and reject noise arriving at other angular directions. Improvements have been made to acoustic receiving sensors. For example, the Conformal Acoustic Velocity System (CAVES) uses a sensor that measures a single component of acoustic particle velocity.

U.S. Patent No. 6,370,084 discloses a device that measures pressure and three components of acoustic particle velocity at a collocated point; however, this device cannot measure pressure or gradients of acoustic particle velocity. It is desired that further improvements be provided for underwater acoustic sensors especially to improve their directivity.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide an underwater acoustic sensor having improved directivity in that it senses parameters, in the form of desired signals, received from selected directions and rejects noise arriving at other angular directions.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an underwater acoustic receiver sensor that measures seven quantities of an acoustic field at a collocated point.

It is an additional object to measure acoustic pressure, three orthogonal components of acoustic particle acceleration, and three spatial gradients of the acceleration vector.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an acoustic receiver having a directivity index of about 9.5 dB.

The underwater acoustic receiver sensor of the present invention measures pressure P_o, three components of acoustic particle velocity (u,v,w), and three gradients of acoustic particle velocity $\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial v}{\partial y}, \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}$ all at a collocated point $\bar{r}_o$ in space. The underwater acoustic receiver sensor is capable of being mounted and comprises an enclosed housing having a center, x, y, and z axes, an interior of the housing filled with a polymer, and a pressure sensor rigidly attached at the center of the housing. The underwater acoustic receiver further comprises three pairs of collinear accelerometers a_1 - a_2; a_3 - a_4; and a_5 - a_6 respectively arranged and attached along the x, y and z axes, respectively, within the housing and with each pair being oppositely positioned relative to the center of the enclosure and separated from each other by a predetermined distance ℓ.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The appended claims particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of this invention. The various objects, advantages and novel features of this invention will be more fully apparent from a reading of the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which like reference numerals refer to like parts, and in which:

FIG. is the sole drawing that is a substantially sectional view and illustrates one form of the acoustic receiver sensor of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In general, the underwater acoustic receiver of the present invention is a device that measures up to seven quantities of an acoustic field at a collocated point. The quantities measured by the receiver are acoustic pressure, the three orthogonal components of acoustic particle acceleration, and three spatial gradients of the acceleration vector. When these quantities are appropriately combined, by means of the present invention, a highly directional acoustic response is generated. The underwater acoustic receiver of the present invention is illustrated in the FIG.

The underwater acoustic receiver sensor 10 measures pressure P_o, three components of acoustic particle velocity (u,v,w), and three gradients of acoustic particle velocity $\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial v}{\partial y}, \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}$ all at a collocated point $\bar{r}_o$ in space. The underwater acoustic receiver sensor has provisions (not shown) for being connected to a mount 12.

The underwater acoustic receiver 10 comprises an enclosed housing 14 having a center 16, x, y, and z axes. An interior of housing 14 is filled with a polymer 20. The housing 14 is preferably comprised of hard plastic and the polymer 20 is preferably polyurethane; however, this can be any resilient material having an acoustic impedance similar to water.

The underwater acoustic receiver further comprises a pressure sensor 22 at the center 16 of the housing 14. The pressure sensor 22 provides an output signal P_o and may be a conventional piezoelectric ceramic hydrophone.

The underwater acoustic receiver further comprises three pairs of collinear accelerometers a_1 - a_2; a_3 - a_4; and a_5 - a_6 respectively arranged along the x, y and z axes within housing 14. Accelerometers a_1 - a_2, a_3 - a_4 and a_5 - a_6 are embedded in polymer 20 in a manner that allows the accelerometers to move with acoustic motion. Each pair of accelerometers is oppositely positioned relative to the center 16 of the enclosure, and separated from each other by a predetermined distance ℓ. Each of the accelerometers a_1 - a_2, a_3 - a_4 and a_5 - a_6 has an operating wavelength λ which is greater than the distance ℓ. The operating wavelength λ corresponds to a frequency range from about 100 Hz to about 2000 Hz. Each of the accelerometers a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, and a_6 may be neutrally buoyant and are conventional devices known in the art. Each of the accelerometers a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, and a_6 provides an output signal respectively termed, a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, and a_6.

The polymer 20 is acoustically transparent and isolates the accelerometers a_1 - a_2; a_3 - a_4; and a_5 - a_6 from the mount 12 and insulates the accelerometers a_1 - a_2; a_3 - a_4; and a_5 – a_6 from structure-borne flexural vibrations from supporting structure near the underwater acoustic receiver 10. The underwater acoustic receiver 10 can thus be mounted on shipboard structure with a minimum of self-noise due to nearby rigid structures and without loss of signal sensitivity.

Alternatively, the device can be floated at a level beneath the surface of a water body, inasmuch as the underwater acoustic receiver 10 is of neutral buoyancy.

The directive response of the underwater acoustic receiver may be shown mathematically using a second order Taylor series expansion of acoustic pressure about the origin of a Cartesian coordinate system. The second-order Taylor series expansion of an acoustic pressure field can be expressed as:

$$P(\bar{r}) \cong P(\bar{r}_o) + \rho_o i[\bar{r}_o - \bar{r}]\begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \\ w \end{bmatrix} + \frac{1}{2}\rho_o i\omega[\bar{r}_o - \bar{r}]\begin{bmatrix} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} & \frac{\partial u}{\partial z} \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} & \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} & \frac{\partial v}{\partial z} \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial v}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial w}{\partial z} \end{bmatrix}[\bar{r} - \bar{r}_o]^T, \qquad (1)$$

where ρ_o is the ambient density of the surrounding fluid, ω is the radian frequency of the acoustic wave u, v, and w are the components of the velocity vector and i is the square root of -1. The position vector is $\bar{r}$ and T indicates the transpose of velocity gradient matrix.

The zeroth order term of the power series expansion of expression (1) is proportional to pressure, the first order to acoustic particle velocity, and the second order proportional to the gradient of velocity. An acoustic vector sensor is a device that measures pressure (P) and all three components of acoustic particle velocity (u, v, w) at a collocated point ($\bar{r}_o$) and one of which is disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,370,084 ('084). Unlike the '084 Patent, the present invention provides a highly directive underwater acoustic receiver 10 that measures a total of seven independent acoustic quantities at a collocated point in space. That is, in addition to measuring particle velocity (u,v,w), as in a vector sensor, the highly directive underwater acoustic receiver 10 also measures the three gradients of acoustic particle velocity $\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial v}{\partial y}, \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}$. These components are proportional to the instantaneous density of the acoustic field.

The present invention provides means so that all seven of these quantities may be appropriately scaled, weighted, and summed. More particularly, as seen in FIG the present invention provides means 24, known in the art, for scaling, weighing, and summing the signals P_o, a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, and a_6 that are routed (connections not shown for the sake of clarity, but known in the art) to means 24 by way of signal path 26. The power sum B^7 of the weighted quantities can be written as:

$$B^7(\theta,\phi) = \left| w_p + w_x a + w_y b + w_z c + w'_x a^2 + w'_y b^2 + w'_z c^2 \right|^2 \qquad (2)$$

where θ,ϕ are the azimuth and elevation acoustic planewave arrival angles and the directional responses are: $a=\cos(\theta)\sin(\phi)$, $b=\sin(\theta)\sin(\phi)$, and $c=\cos(\phi)$. The arbitrary weights are w_p, w_z, w_y, w_z, w'_x, w'_y, and w'_z. The maximum directivity of the highly directive acoustic receiver can be determined by substituting equation (2) into the expression that defines an array's Directivity Index in a manner known in the art. The Directivity Index can be defined in a manner known in the art, such as that disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,172,940 ('940), herein incorporated by reference. Using the principles of the '940 Patent, it may be shown that highly directive acoustic receiver 10 of the present invention has a Directivity Index of 9.5 dB. This compares to a Directivity Index of 4.8 dB for the acoustic vector sensor disclosed in the previously mentioned '084 Patent. A single pressure sensor of the prior art is omnidirectional and has no directivity 10, whereas the underwater acoustic receiver 10 has a Directivity Index of about 9.5 dB, used to measure a point in space, and is equivalent to a 9-element line array of pressure sensors with half-wavelength separations between elements. Hence, at a frequency of 1000Hz, for example, an array of pressure sensors would need to have a length of 22 feet to obtain the same directivity as the single highly directive underwater acoustic receiver 10 of the present invention.

In operation, and with reference to the FIG, the underwater acoustic receiver 10 measures pressure (P_o). Acoustic particle acceleration being sensed by each of the accelerometers a_1-a_6 (which can be easily converted to acoustic velocity by taking the time derivative) is obtained by taking the average of the acceleration along a given axis. For example, the x-acceleration component (denoted *u* in terms of velocity) is obtained by summing accelerometer outputs a_1 and a_2 and dividing by two. The acceleration components a_y and a_z (denoted v and w in velocity) are obtained in a similar manner. To prevent phase errors, the separation distance, ℓ, between collinear accelerometers a_1-a_6 should be less than a wavelength, $\ell \ll \lambda$, of the frequency of interest. The measured pressure, acceleration (time derivative of velocity), and acceleration gradient (time derivative of velocity gradient) may be expressed as follows:

Pressure: P_o (3)

Acceleration: $a_x = \frac{a_1 + a_{2,}}{2} a_y = \frac{a_3 + a_{4,}}{2} a_z = \frac{a_5 + a_6}{2}$ (4)

Acceleration Gradient: $\frac{\partial a_x}{\partial x} \cong \frac{a_1 - a_2}{\ell}, \frac{\partial a_y}{\partial y} \cong \frac{a_3 - a_4}{\ell}, \frac{\partial a_z}{\partial z} = \frac{a_5 - a_6}{\ell}$ (5)

The spatial gradient of acceleration is approximated by taking finite differences of the acceleration components. For example, the acceleration gradient along the x-axis is $\frac{\Delta a_x}{\Delta_x} = \frac{a_2 - a_1}{\ell}$. The u-velocity gradient, $\frac{\partial u}{\partial x}$, is obtained by taking the time derivative of the acceleration gradient which, for harmonic planewaves, is equivalent to dividing the acceleration by a constant and multiplying by angular frequency. Likewise, the spatial gradients $\frac{\partial \mathrm{v}}{\partial \mathrm{y}}$ and $\frac{\partial \mathrm{w}}{\partial \mathrm{z}}$ are obtained in a manner given for the u-velocity gradient. Thus, with six neutrally buoyant accelerometers a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, and a_6 and one pressure sensor

P_o, the acoustic quantities P_o, u, v, w, u', v', and w' are measured and utilized by the present invention to provide an underwater acoustic receiver 10 having a Directivity Index of about 9.5 dB.

It should now be appreciated that the underwater acoustic receiver sensor of the present invention has improved directivity.

It will be understood that various changes and details, steps and arrangement of parts and method steps, which have been described and illustrated in order to explain the nature of the invention, may be made by those skilled in the art within the principle and scope of the invention as expressed in the appending claims.

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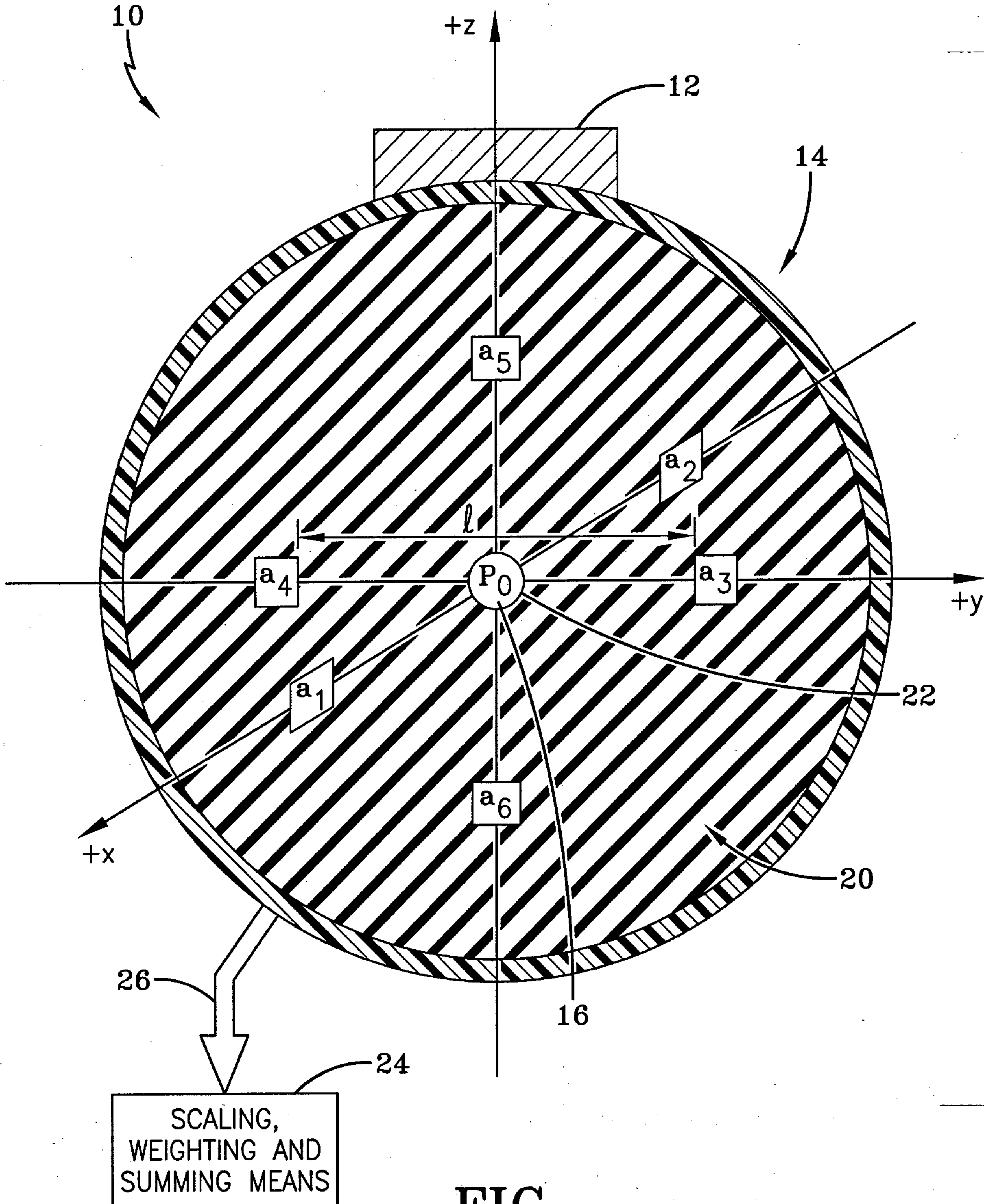
HIGHLY DIRECTIVE UNDERWATER ACOUSTIC RECEIVER

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An underwater acoustic receiver sensor is disclosed that measure up to seven (7) quantities of acoustic field at a collocated point. The quantities measured by the acoustic receiver sensor are acoustic pressure, three orthogonal components of acoustic particle acceleration and three spatial gradients of the acceleration vector. These quantities are appropriately combined and provides for improved directivity of the acoustic receiver sensor.


10
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SCALING, WEIGHTING AND SUMMING MEANS

FIG