

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
26 February 2009 (26.02.2009)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2009/024500 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification:
A47J 31/46 (2006.01) A47J 31/36 (2006.01)
- (21) International Application Number:
PCT/EP2008/060555
- (22) International Filing Date: 12 August 2008 (12.08.2008)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
07114608.8 20 August 2007 (20.08.2007) EP
- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): NESTEC
S.A. [CH/CH]; Avenue Nestlé 55, CH-1800 Vevey (CH).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): PIAI, Guido
[IT/DE]; Dauthendeystrasse 26, 81377 München (DE).

ETTER, Stefan [CH/CH]; Kirchweg 8, CH-3122 Kehrsatz (CH).

(74) Agent: SCHNYDER, Frank; Avenue Nestlé 55, CH-1800 Vevey (CH).

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: BEVERAGE PRODUCTION MODULE AND METHOD FOR OPERATING A BEVERAGE PRODUCTION MODULE

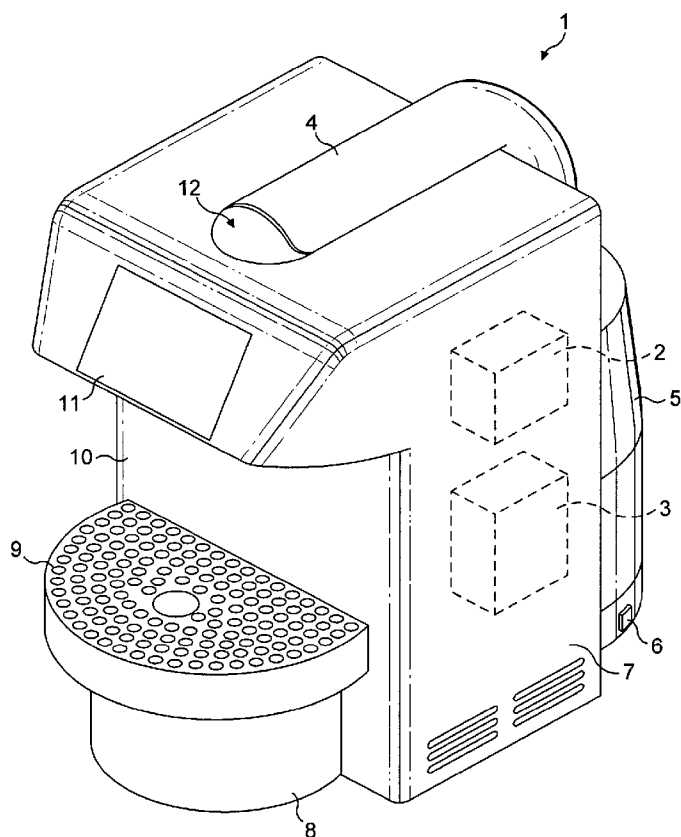


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to a beverage production module (1) comprising a pump (3) for delivering a fluid from a tank (5) to an extraction chamber (13), a power source (17) for the pump (3) and a controller (14) for operating the pump (3) and for controlling the voltage applied from the power source (17) to the pump (3), wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump (3) at a normal operation voltage (U3) and to operate the pump (3) over a predefined time (T1, T2) at a reduced voltage level (U1, U2). The present invention further relates to a method for operating the pump (3) of a beverage production module (1).

WO 2009/024500 A1



FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MT, NL,
NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG,
CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))
- of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))

Declarations under Rule 4.17:

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))

Published:

- with international search report

**Beverage Production Module and Method for
Operating a Beverage Production Module**

5

The present invention generally relates to the production of beverages or liquid comestibles (soup, etc.).

Preferably, the invention relates to production devices which are designed to produce a beverage on the basis of ingredients which are contained in a capsule. The capsule is inserted in the beverage production module which is provided with means to introduce a liquid into the interior of the capsule. The interaction of the introduced liquid with the ingredients produces a beverage which can then be obtained from the beverage production module.

As an illustrated example, such devices are already used, among others, in the field of coffee machines. Especially regarding coffee machines there is a wide range between relatively simple "one button" machines on one end of the range, and highly complex machines with integrated additional functions, such as for example producing steam, prewarming cups and/or ensuring a "flow stop" function, etc., at the higher end of the range.

25

Highly important tasks within the field of beverage production modules are user friendliness and quality of the produced beverage.

It is the object of the present invention to propose a beverage production module and a method for operating a beverage production module which is user friendly and insures a good quality of the produced beverage.

30

According to a first aspect the present invention relates to a beverage production module comprising a pump for delivering a fluid from a tank to a extraction chamber, a power source for the pump and a controller for operating
5 the pump and for controlling the voltage applied from the power source to the pump, wherein the controller is adapted to operate the pump at a normal operation voltage level and to operate the pump over a predefined time at a reduced voltage level.

10

According to one embodiment, the controller is adapted to operate the pump after the start at said reduced voltage level and after the predefined time to operate the pump at said normal operation voltage level.

15

According to a further embodiment, the controller is adapted to operate the pump at said normal operation voltage and during the operation to operate the pump for the predefined time at said reduced voltage level.

20

In one aspect the reduced voltage level is a constant voltage.

In another aspect the reduced voltage level is a
25 decreasing or increasing voltage.

Preferably, the power source provides DC voltage to the pump.

30 The pump circuit can comprise a Buck-converter.

The pump circuit can alternatively comprise a motor chopper.

As an alternative to the provision of direct current, the power source can provide alternating current AC voltage to the pump.

5

Preferably, the controller is adapted to operate the pump at a reduced voltage level by decreasing the root mean square (RMS) value of the applied voltage (and thus reducing the power).

10

Alternatively, the controller is adapted to operate the pump at a reduced voltage level by decreasing the maximum applied voltage level.

15 The pump can be an inductive load.

According to a further aspect of the present invention a method is provided for operating the pump of a beverage production module, comprising the steps of providing a power source for the pump, delivering via the pump a fluid from a tank to an extraction chamber and during said step of delivering operating the pump at a normal operation voltage level and operating the pump over a predefined time at a reduced voltage level.

25

In a first embodiment the method comprises operating the pump after the start at said reduced voltage level and operating after the predefined time the pump at said normal operation voltage.

30

In a second embodiment the method comprises operating the pump at said normal operation voltage and during the

operation operating the pump for the predefined time at said reduced voltage level.

Preferably, the method comprises providing for the reduced
5 voltage level a constant voltage.

Alternatively, the method comprises providing for the reduced voltage level a decreasing or increasing voltage

10 Preferably, the method comprises providing direct current DC voltage to the pump.

The method can comprises providing a Buck-converter for the pump circuit.

15

Alternatively, the method can comprise providing a motor chopper for the pump circuit.

As an alternative to providing direct current the method
20 can comprise providing alternating current AC voltage to the pump.

Preferably, the method comprises operating the pump at a reduced voltage level comprises decreasing the root mean
25 square (RMS) value of the applied voltage.

Alternatively, the method comprises operating the pump at a reduced voltage level comprises decreasing the peak value of the voltage.

30

According to another aspect the present invention relates to a beverage production module comprising a pump for delivering a fluid from a tank to an extraction chamber, a

power source for the pump and a controller for operating the pump and for controlling the voltage applied from the power source to the pump, wherein the controller is adapted to start the operation of the pump at a reduced
5 voltage level and after a predefined time to operate the pump at a normal operation voltage.

Preferably, the controller is adapted to operate the pump at said reduced voltage level for less than 10s.

10

According to another aspect the present invention relates to a method for operating the pump of a beverage production module, comprising the steps of providing a power source for the pump, delivering via the
15 pump a fluid from a tank to a extraction chamber and at the beginning of said step of delivering operating the pump at a reduced voltage level and after a predefined time operating the pump at a normal operation voltage.

20 Preferably, the predefined time is less than 10s.

Further features, advantages and objects of the present invention will become evident by means of the figures of the enclosed drawings as well as by the following detailed
25 explanation of illustrative-only embodiments of the present invention.

Fig. 1 shows a beverage production module according to the present invention,

30

Fig. 2 shows a schematic block diagram of the main elements of a beverage production module according to the present invention,

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing the development of the pump voltage over the time,

5 Fig. 4A is a flow chart showing the process steps according to the main idea underlying the present invention,

Fig. 4B is a flow chart showing the steps according to a
10 first possibility when using AC voltage,

Fig. 4C is a flow chart showing the steps according to a second possibility when using AC voltage,

15 Fig. 5A is a diagram showing the development of the AC voltage over time according to the first possibility as explained in Fig. 4B,

Fig. 5B is a diagram showing the development of the AC
20 voltage over time according to the second possibility as explained in Fig. 4C,

Fig. 6 shows the pump circuit when using AC voltage, and

25 Figures 7A and 7B show different possibilities of a pump circuit when using DC voltage.

Fig. 1 shows a beverage production module according to the present invention, generally designated with reference
30 numeral 1, which comprises a casing 7 which houses further components or to which further components are attached.

The beverage production module 1 comprises a beverage delivery outlet via which a beverage produced by the

beverage production module 1 and delivered to the beverage delivery outlet by a pump 3 can be obtained. On the rear side of the casing 7 a water supply reservoir or water container 5 can be provided.

5

On the front side of the beverage production module 1 a base part can be provided. The base part can essentially have a shape of a half-cylindrical platform. The base part can comprise a drip tray 8 and the upper surface of the base part can serve as a cup support 9 in the region which is essentially arranged vertically below the beverage delivery outlet. The drip tray 8 can serve for collecting liquid dripping from the beverage delivery outlet.

15 The beverage production module can comprise further a catchment tank 10 for collecting capsules which have been used and which dropped internally after the beverage has been delivered.

20 The base part comprising the drip tray 8 and the cup support 9 can be removably attached to the casing 7. Alternatively, the entire component consisting of the drip tray 8, the cup support 9 and the catchment tank 10 can be attached revovably to the casing 7 in order to rinse or empty the drip tray 8 and to empty the catchment tank 10.

Inside the casing 7, the beverage production module 1 can comprise a water pump 3, a water heating unit 2 such as for example a thermo block or a boiler as well as an extraction chamber 13. The pump 3 is adapted to pump water or any other fluid contained in the tank 5 to the extraction chamber 13 where the beverage then is prepared. The water which is pumped from the tank 5 to the extraction chamber 13 is heated by the water heating unit

2. Thus, the beverage production module 1 is capable of producing a heated, preferably pressurised liquid and then to feed it into the extraction chamber 13 in order to prepare a beverage in a cup or glass.

5

The pump 3 and the heating unit 2 as well as further components housed in the casing 7 are not visible from the outside and are therefore shown with dashed lines in the figures.

10

The extraction chamber 13 can be designed to house a beverage ingredient containing pouch or capsule, which can be inserted through a capsule inserting slot 12 on the top surface of the casing 7 when lifting or opening a leaver or lid arranged on the top surface of the casing 7. The leaver or lid functions also as activator 4 for mechanically or automatically clamping the capsule and starting the preparation process. Heated water, preferably under pressure, will then be injected into the capsule in order to interact with the ingredients contained therein.

20

The beverage production module 1 can furthermore be provided with a graphical interface 11 such as for example a display, a touchpad or the like in order to allow the control of the operation of the beverage production module.

25

In addition, the beverage production module 1 can comprise further user interfaces, such as for example switches or buttons 6 and so on to further control the operation of the module 1.

30

With reference to Fig. 2 the main components of a beverage production module 1 according to the present invention

will be explained in relation to the block diagram. It is to be noted that the beverage production module 1 comprises further elements and components necessary for carrying out the functionalities, which are not shown in
5 the figure for the sake of clarity.

As already explained a beverage production module 1 comprises a tank 5 containing the liquid, fluid or water which is used for preparing the beverage. A pump 3 is
10 adapted to deliver liquid from the tank 5 to the heating unit 2 and further to the extraction chamber 13 , into which the capsule can be inserted. A power source 17 is provided which delivers power to the pump 3 and the heating unit 2. The power source 17 may be connected also
15 to further components which in the block diagram is not shown for the sake of clarity. Alternatively, different power sources for the heating unit 2 and the pump 3 may be provided.

20 The power source 17 is connected to the pump 3 via a pump triac 16 and is further connected to the heating unit 2 via a heating triac 15. The heating triac 15 and the pump triac 16 are adapted to block parts of the voltage which are applied from the power source 17 to the pump 3 and the
25 heating unit 2. For example, when an alternating current (AC) voltage is provided by the power source 17, then the heating triac 15 and the pump 16 will block the negative part of the voltage sinus, the triac thus acting as a rectifier.

30

In addition, a controller 14 is provided for controlling the different components of the beverage production module 1. Specifically, the controller 14 controls the operation

of the pump 3, the heating unit 2, and the triacs 15 and 16.

Fig. 3 shows a diagram of the pump voltage over the time. Hereby, a coordinate system is shown, whereby on the x-axis the time t is shown and on the y-axis the pump voltage, that is the voltage which is applied to the pump 3 is shown.

10 With reference to Fig. 3, the main idea underlying the present invention will now be explained. In the normal operation mode, the pump 3 is operated with a normal operation voltage U_3 . This voltage may either be the supply voltage of the electricity network to which the beverage production module 1 is connected or may be any
15 other voltage which is intended for operating the pump, that voltage may e.g. be obtained by transforming the supply voltage to the desired voltage for operating the pump. The controller 14 according to the present invention
20 is adapted to control the pump triac 16 or other components in a way to operate the pump 3 at voltages which are smaller than the normal operation voltage U_3 . Specifically, the pump 3 can be operated over a predefined time at a voltage which is smaller than the normal
25 operation voltage U_3 .

Hereby, two different scenarios are possible. As shown in Fig. 3 at a starting time T_s the pump 3 is started. This may e.g. be triggered by a user pressing a button when he
30 desires to make a coffee or by switching on the beverage production module 1. When starting the operation of the pump 3 at the starting time T_s the controller may operate the pump 3 at a voltage U_1 which is smaller than the normal operation voltage U_3 . Within a predefined time T_1

the voltage U_1 is then increased until the normal operation voltage U_3 is reached. Hereby, the present invention is not limited to the example as shown in Fig. 3. The increasing of the voltage from U_1 to U_3 may be
5 linear, exponential, logarithmic or the like. Further, it is also possible to maintain the voltage U_1 over the whole time T_1 and then suddenly switch to the normal operation voltage U_3 . The advantage of starting the operation of the pump 3 with a lower voltage than the normal operation
10 voltage U_3 is a decreased noise of the pump 3. The pump 3 specifically in the first seconds after being started is louder since during this period the first amount of water is pumped into the capsule.

15 It is to be noted that the voltage U_1 may refer to a constant voltage, to an increasing voltage or to a voltage being partly constant and partly increasing. In any case U_1 has just to satisfy the condition $U_1 < U_3$. In Fig. 3 the example is shown, that U_1 is a linearly increasing
20 voltage. With dashed lines other types of increase are shown. The voltage U_1 , i.e. a voltage being smaller than the normal operation voltage U_3 is kept for a time T_1 after the start of the pump 3.

25 Normally, the pump within the first five seconds after the start of a coffee is louder. According to the present invention within this period the noise reduction is achieved by dimming the pump. "To dim" means to reduce the intensity of something. This word is normally used in the
30 lighting, connected with the reduction of the intensity of a light source. In the present case to dim is intended to mean to reduce the voltage applied to the pump.

According to a further aspect of the present invention during the operation of the pump, whereby the pump 3 is operated with the normal operation voltage U_3 , the pump may be dimmed for a predefined time period. As shown in
5 Fig. 3 the pump voltage may be decreased to a voltage level U_2 for a predefined time T_2 . Hereby, the decreasing from U_3 to U_2 may be linear, exponential or even suddenly.

Again it is to be noted that the voltage U_2 may refer to a
10 constant voltage, to a decreasing and/or increasing voltage or to a voltage being partly constant and partly decreasing and/or increasing. In any case U_2 has just to satisfy the condition $U_2 < U_3$. In Fig. 3 the example is shown, that U_2 is a linearly decreasing, kept constant for
15 a while and then increasing again.

The advantage of dimming the pump 3 during the normal operation is that thereby the flow and pressure of the pump 3 can be regulated. Specifically, when reducing the
20 voltage also the amount of liquid which is delivered by the pump from the tank 5 to the extraction chamber 13 is reduced, e.g. the ratio of liquid per time is decreased. This is for example important for the quality of the coffee, the so called "in cup quality". Sometimes, the
25 ingredients contained within the capsule are so solvent that the heating unit 2 is not able to heat all the liquid pumped by the pump 3 from the tank 5 to the extraction chamber 13. In this case, it is advantageous to reduce the amount of liquid per time delivered by the pump 3.

30

Another example is the so-called "crema" of the coffee. The crema is a sign for a high quality coffee and depends on the pressure applied when delivering the liquid into the capsule within the extraction chamber 13. By

controlling the voltage applied to the pump 3 also the pressure of the pump 3 can be controlled and thereby the creation of the crema can be controlled and enhanced.

5 Further, U_1 and U_2 may be equal or different voltage ranges, whereby the present invention is not limited to the example shown in Fig. 3, where the voltage range of U_1 is larger than the voltage range of U_2 .

10 It is to be noted that the normal operation voltage of the pump 3 may be reduced just once, i.e. either at the beginning of the operation of the pump 3 or in-between the operation of the pump 3. A further possibility would also be to reduce the voltage at the end of the pump operation.

15

Fig. 4A shows a flow chart showing the process steps according to the main idea of the present invention. The process starts in step S0 e.g. with switching on the beverage production module 1 or with starting the
20 preparation of a coffee. The pump 3 is then activated with a voltage value U_1 . In the next step S2 the pump voltage is increased to the normal pump operation voltage U_3 . As previously explained different methods of operating the pump with the lower voltage or increasing the voltage are
25 possible. The pump then in step S3 is operated with the normal voltage U_3 . In the next step S4 the pump voltage can be decreased to a value U_2 being smaller than the normal operation voltage U_3 . In the further step the pump can be operated for a predefined time with the voltage U_2 .
30 In the next step S6 the pump voltage is increased again to the normal operation value U_3 and the pump in step S7 is operated with the normal voltage value U_3 . The process ends in step S8 for example with the delivery of the beverage from the beverage production module 1 or with

switching off the beverage production module 1. It is to be noted that the step S1 can be omitted and that the process can from the beginning start with a normal operation voltage value of U_3 . Alternatively, the steps S4
5 to S6 can be omitted and the pump voltage can be reduced only during the start sequence. A further possibility is to reduce the voltage additionally or exclusively at the end of the operation of the pump 3.

10 In the following different embodiments for reducing the pump voltage will be explained with reference to the figures.

Figures 4B, 4C, 5A and 5B relate to an embodiment where
15 alternating current (AC) voltage is used. Hereby, Figures 4B and 5A relate to a first possibility of reducing the voltage applied to the pump 3 when using AC current.

In Fig. 5A a first diagram is shown showing the voltage
20 delivered by the power source 17 over the time t . The voltage hereby corresponds to a sinus curve. In the first diagram the zero crossing point of the voltage is marked. In the normal operation mode the controller 14 operates the pump triac 16 in a way that the triac is triggered
25 together with the zero crossing of the voltage so that the positive part of the voltage is applied to the pump and the negative part of the voltage is blocked by the triac 16. In order to decrease the voltage applied to the pump, the pump triac 16 is not triggered at the zero crossing of
30 the voltage but triggered at a predefined time T_{triac} after the zero crossing of the voltage. This is shown in the second diagram of Fig. 5A where the triggering moments of the pump triac are shown over the time. For increasing the voltage applied to the pump the duration between the zero

crossing and the triggering of the pump, that is the time T_{triac} is decreased with every voltage cycle, until the difference between the zero crossing and the triggering is zero. Alternatively, the difference between the zero
5 crossing and the triggering can be maintained fixed for a predefined time range and then suddenly for the next voltage cycle set to zero. The advantage of slowly increasing the voltage is that thereby problems relating to electromagnetical compatibility can be avoided.

10

For a better understanding the steps as shown in Fig. 5A will be explained with reference to the flow chart shown in Fig. 4B. The process is started in step S10, e.g. with switching on the beverage production module 1 or with
15 starting the preparation of a beverage. In the next step S11, the pump triac 16 is triggered at a predefined time T_{triac} after zero crossing of the voltage. In the next step S12 which is repeated several times the difference between the zero crossing and the triggering is decreased over a predefined time range until T_{triac} is zero. In the next
20 step S13, the pump is then operated normally while triggering the pump triac 16 at the zero crossing of the voltage. The process ends in step S14, e.g. with switching off the beverage production module.

25

The advantage of this method is that no further hardware components are necessary for implementing the inventive method. Since during normal operation mode the negative part of the voltage sinus is already blocked and the pump
30 triac 16 is already provided, the changed triggering time of the pump triac 16 is only a matter of software implementation and no special hardware is necessary.

A further possibility of reducing the AC voltage applied to the pump would be to use a reduced maximum voltage value. This will be explained in detail in the following. Generally, a voltage having a sinusoidal curve can be
5 described with the following equation:

$$U(t) = U_{\max} \sin (\omega t + \varphi_0)$$

U_{\max} designates the peak value of the voltage and φ_0
10 designates the zero phase angle of the voltage. The angular frequency ω can be derived from

$$\omega = 2\pi f,$$

15 whereby f is the frequency.

According to the further idea of the present invention, the voltage applied to the pump can also be reduced by reducing the peak value U_{\max} of the voltage. This is shown
20 for example in Fig. 5B. Here a sinusoidal voltage curve is shown over the time. Hereby the voltage starts with a peak value $U_{\max 1}$ and during several wave cycles is increased to a further peak value $U_{\max 2}$. Hereby, in the Figure the sinus voltage with the peak value $U_{\max 2}$ is shown with dashed
25 lines. The actual voltage used for the operation of the pumped is shown as drawn through line. There from it can be seen that the actual used decreased voltage converges the normal operation voltage having the peak value $U_{\max 2}$.

30 The steps of this process are also shown in the flow chart of Fig. 4C. Hereby, in accordance with Figures 4A and 4B, the process starts in step S20. In the next step S21 the pump 3 is operated with a peak value of the voltage $U_{\max 1}$. In the next step S22 which is repeated several times the

voltage $U_{\max 1}$ is increased to the maximum voltage value of $U_{\max 2}$. In the further step S23 the pump 3 is then operated with the peak value of the voltage $U_{\max 2}$ and the process in step S24 ends for example with switching off the beverage
5 production module.

As previously explained, the voltage can also be suddenly increased or can be increased linearly, exponentially, logarithmically or in any other way. The advantage of
10 slowly increasing the voltage is that compatibility problems between different components can be avoided.

Advantageously, the pump 3 is an inductive component, e.g. a solenoid pump. In case that a pump is an inductive load
15 then of importance is not the maximum applied voltage U_{\max} but more the integral of the applied voltage since the current is delayed after the voltage curve. As shown in Fig. 5A with triggering the triac after a predefined time after the zero crossing, the integral of the applied
20 voltage can be changed. In case of an inductive load pump no further filters or components are required and electromagnetic compatibility problems can be avoided.

Alternatively, also other types of pumps can be used, in
25 which case an additional filter could be provided in order to avoid compatibility problems.

Fig. 6 is an exemplary embodiment of an electric circuit for the pump. In the electric circuit 18 a power source 17
30 is provided to which the pump 3, the heating unit 2, the heater triac 15 and the pump triac 16 are connected. In the circuit further the controller 14 is provided comprising a micro controlling unit 19. The controller triggers the triacs 15, 16 of the pump 3 and the heating

unit 2 in order to control the applied voltage. In case that the pump 3 is not an inductive load additional filters 20a, 20b can be provided.

5 In an alternative embodiment instead of alternating current (AC) voltage also direct current (DC) voltage can be used. Two exemplary circuits are shown in Figures 7A and 7B. Hereby, after the power source 17 a rectifier 23 is provided for rectifying the alternating current voltage
10 from the power source 17.

In Fig. 7A hereby a circuit using the rectifier 23 and a buck converter 21 is shown. In the circuit a polarised condensator 24, a switch 25, a diode 26, a coil 27 and a
15 condensator 28 is provided for controlling the voltage applied to the pump 3.

In the example shown in Fig. 7B, the rectifier 23 and a motor chopper 22 is provided for controlling the pump 3.
20 The electric circuit includes a polarised condensator 24, a switch 25 and a diode 26.

When operating the pump 3 at a reduced voltage, the chosen voltage has to satisfy several needs. On one hand, the
25 voltage has to be high enough to ensure a proper operation of the pump 3. On the other hand, the voltage has to be small enough in order to achieve the desired functions, e.g. a noise reduction or a reduced flow per time of the liquid. In case that the normal operation voltage of the
30 pump is approximately 230V, a good compromise is a reduced voltage of 170V. This would correspond to an integral value of 73%.

Reference Signs

- (1) Beverage production module
- 5 (2) Heating unit
- (3) Pump
- (4) Activator
- (5) Tank
- (6) Button
- 10 (7) Casing
- (8) Drip tray
- (9) Cup support
- (10) Catchment tank
- (11) Graphical interface
- 15 (12) Capsule insertion slot
- (13) Extraction chamber
- (14) Controller
- (15) Heater triac
- (16) Pump triac
- 20 (17) Power source
- (18) DC electric circuit
- (19) Micro controlling unit
- (20) Filter
- (21) Buck converter
- 25 (22) Motor chopper
- (23) Rectifier
- (24) Polarised condensator
- (25) Switch
- (26) Diode
- 30 (27) Coil
- (28) Condensator

Claims

1. Beverage production module (1) comprising
a pump (3) for delivering a fluid from a tank (5) to an
5 extraction chamber (13),
a power source (17) for the pump (3) and
a controller (14) for operating the pump (3) and for
controlling the voltage applied from the power source (17)
to the pump (3),
10 wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump
(3) at a normal operation voltage (U3) and to operate the
pump (3) over a predefined time (T1, T2) at a reduced
voltage level (U1, U2).
- 15 2. Module (1) according to claim 1
wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump
(3) after the start at said reduced voltage level (U1) and
after the predefined time (T1) to operate the pump (3) at
said normal operation voltage (U3).
- 20 3. Module (1) according to claim 1 or 2
wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump
(3) at said normal operation voltage (U3) and during the
operation to operate the pump (3) for the predefined time
25 (T2) at said reduced voltage level (U2).
4. Module (1) according to any of claims 1 to 3,
wherein the reduced voltage level (U1, U2) is a constant
voltage.
- 30 5. Module (1) according to any of claims 1 to 3,
wherein the reduced voltage level (U1, U2) is a decreasing
or increasing voltage.

6. Module (1) according to any of the preceding claims,
wherein the power source (17) provides direct current DC
voltage to the pump (3).

5

7. Module (1) according to claim 6,
wherein the pump (3) circuit comprises a Buck-converter
(21).

10

8. Module (1) according to claim 6,
wherein the pump (3) circuit comprises a motor chopper
(22).

15

9. Module (1) according to any of claims 1 to 5,
wherein the power source (17) provides alternating current
AC voltage to the pump (3).

20

10. Module (1) according to claim 9,
wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump
(3) at a reduced voltage level (U1, U2) by decreasing the
integral of the applied voltage.

25

11. Module (1) according to claim 9,
wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump
(3) at a reduced voltage level (U1, U2) by decreasing the
maximum applied voltage.

30

12. Module (1) according to any of the preceding claims,
wherein the pump (3) is an inductive load.

13. Method for operating the pump (3) of a beverage
production module (1), comprising the steps of
providing a power source (17) for the pump (3),

delivering via the pump (3) a fluid from a tank (5) to a
extraction chamber (13) and
during said step of delivering operating the pump (3) at a
normal operation voltage (U3) and
5 operating the pump (3) over a predefined time (T1, T2) at
a reduced voltage level (U1, U2).

14. Method according to claim 13, comprising the steps of
operating the pump (3) after the start at said reduced
10 voltage level (U1) and operating after the predefined time
(T1) the pump (3) at said normal operation voltage (U3).

15. Method according to claim 13 or 14, comprising the
steps of
15 operating the pump (3) at said normal operation voltage
(U3) and during the operation operating the pump (3) for
the predefined time (T2) at said reduced voltage level
(U2).

20 16. Method according to any of claims 13 to 15, comprising
the step of
providing for the reduced voltage level (U1, U2) a
constant voltage.

25 17. Method according to any of claims 13 to 15, comprising
the step of
providing for the reduced voltage level (U1, U2) a
decreasing or increasing voltage

30 18. Method according to any of the preceding claims,
comprising the step of
providing direct current DC voltage to the pump (3).

19. Method according to claim 18, comprising the step of providing a Buck-converter (21) for the pump (3) circuit.

20. Method according to claim 18, comprising the step of
5 providing a motor chopper (22) for the pump (3) circuit.

21. Method according to any of claims 13 to 17,
comprising the step of
providing alternating current AC voltage to the pump (3).

10

22. Method according to claim 21,
wherein the step of operating the pump (3) at a reduced
voltage level (U1, U2) comprises decreasing the integral
of the applied voltage.

15

23. Method according to claim 21,
wherein the step of operating the pump (3) at a reduced
voltage level (U1, U2) comprises decreasing the maximum
applied voltage.

20

24. Method according to any of the preceding claims,
comprising the step of
providing the pump (3) as an inductive load.

25. Beverage production module (1) comprising
a pump (3) for delivering a fluid from a tank (5) to an
extraction chamber (13),
a power source (17) for the pump (3) and
a controller (14) for operating the pump (3) and for
30 controlling the voltage applied from the power source (17)
to the pump (3),

wherein the controller (14) is adapted to start the
operation of the pump (3) at a reduced voltage level (U1)

and after a predefined time (T1) to operate the pump (3) at a normal operation voltage (U3).

26. Module (1) according to claim 25,
5 wherein the controller (14) is adapted to operate the pump (3) at said reduced voltage level (U1) for less than 10s.

27. Method for operating the pump (3) of a beverage
production module (1), comprising the steps of
10 providing a power source (17) for the pump (3),
delivering via the pump (3) a fluid from a tank (5) to a
extraction chamber (13) and
at the beginning of said step of delivering operating the
pump (3) at a reduced voltage level (U1) and after a
15 predefined time (T1) operating the pump (3) at a normal
operation voltage (U3).

28. Method according to claim 27,
wherein the predefined time (T1) is less than 10s.
20

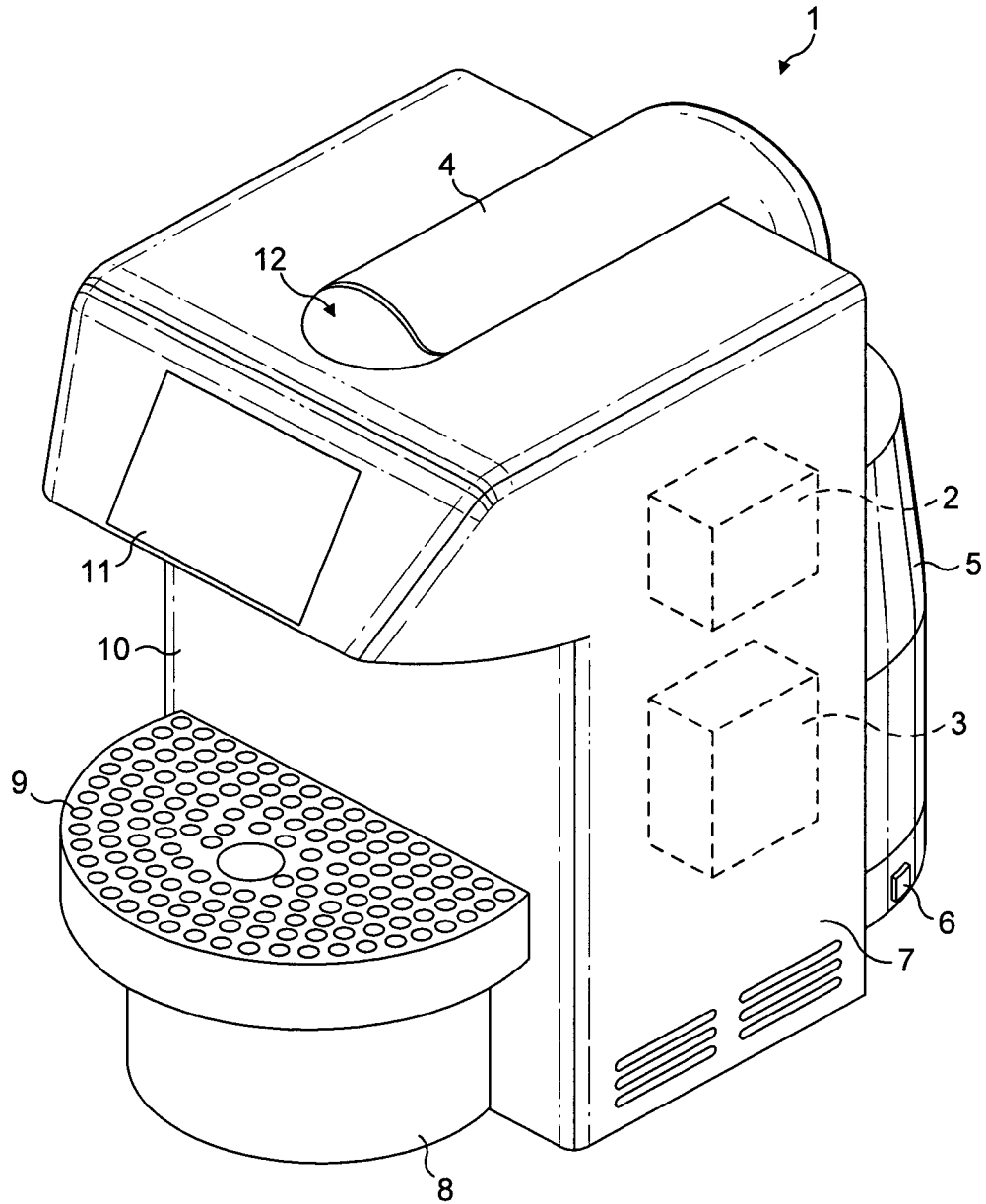


FIG. 1

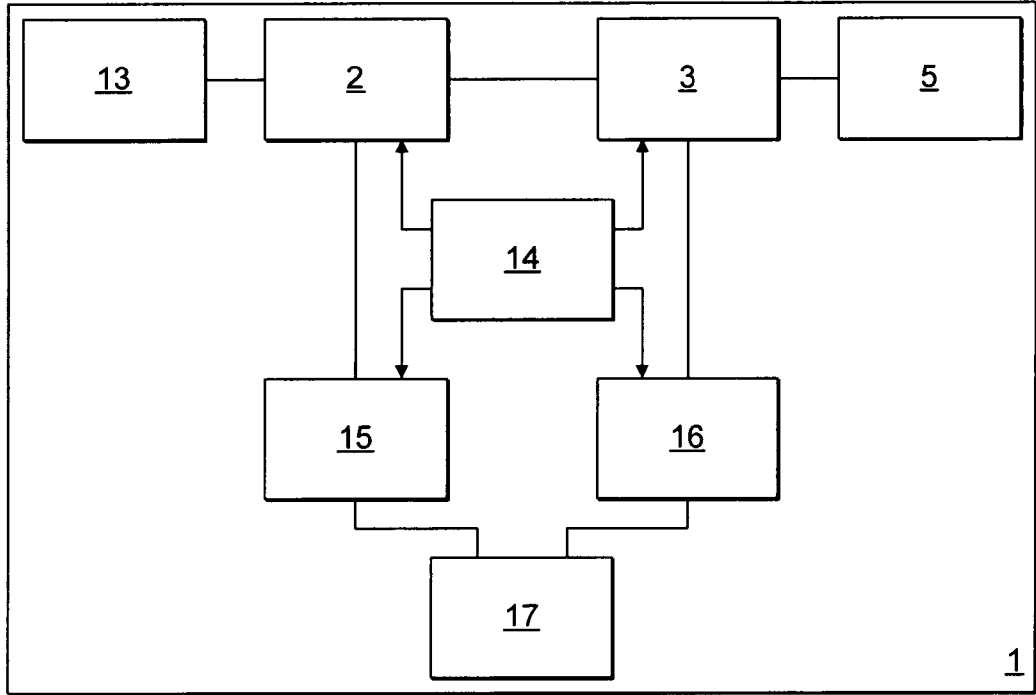


FIG. 2

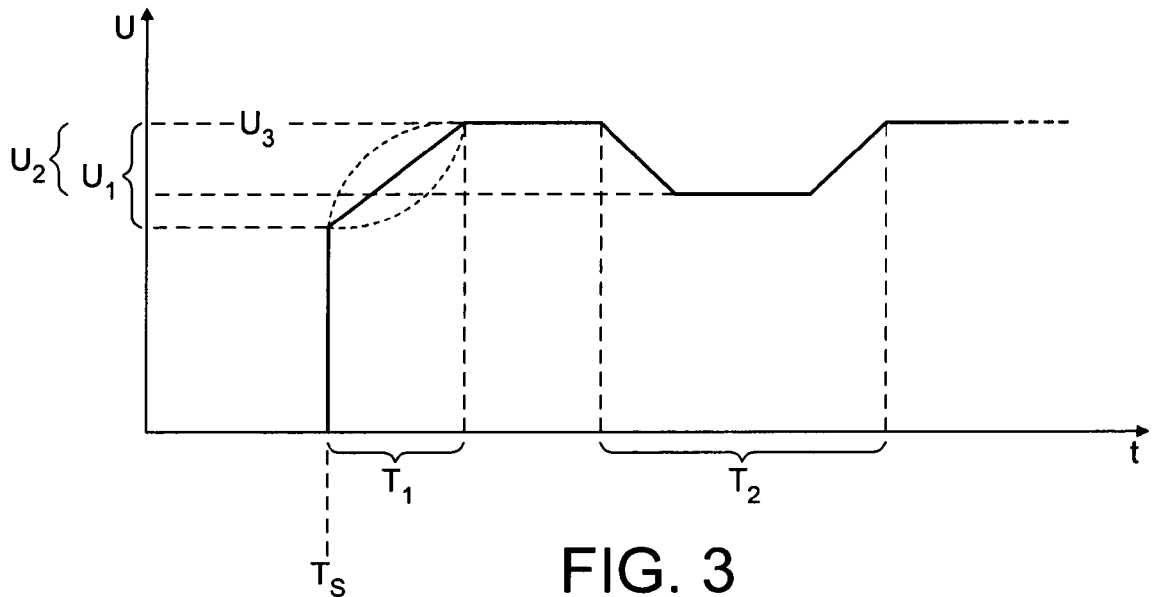


FIG. 3

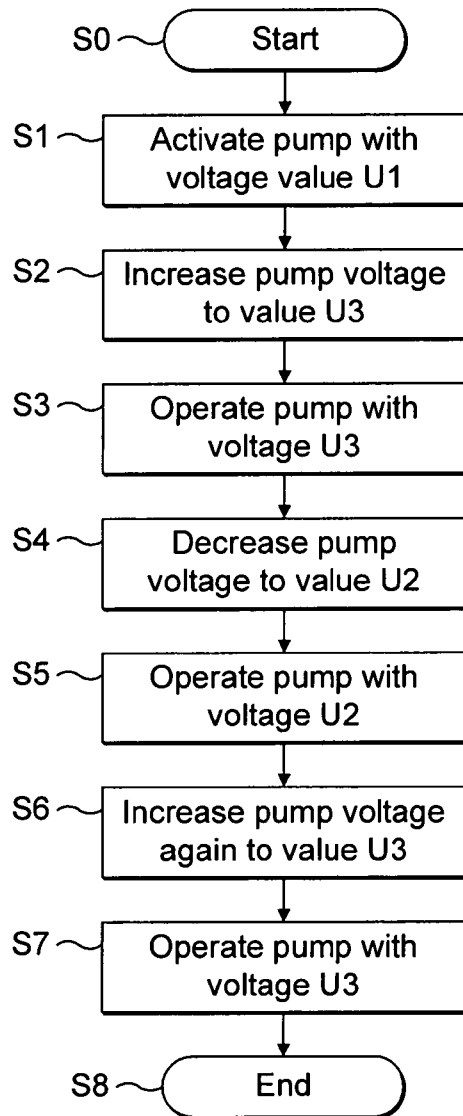


FIG. 4a

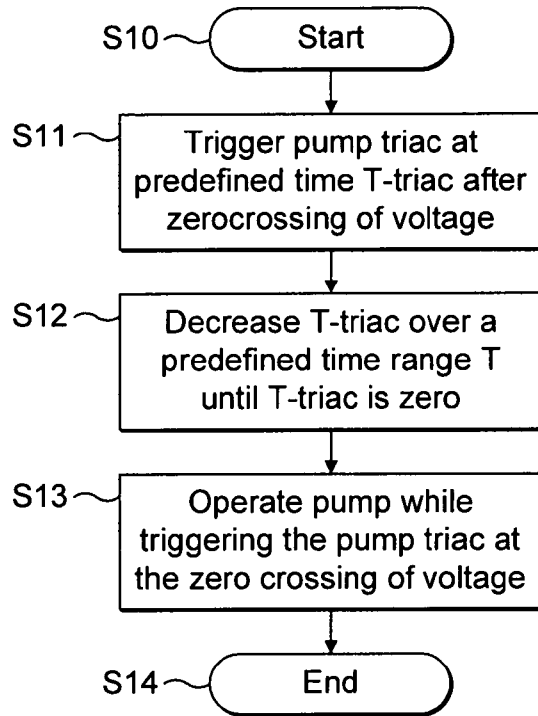


FIG. 4b

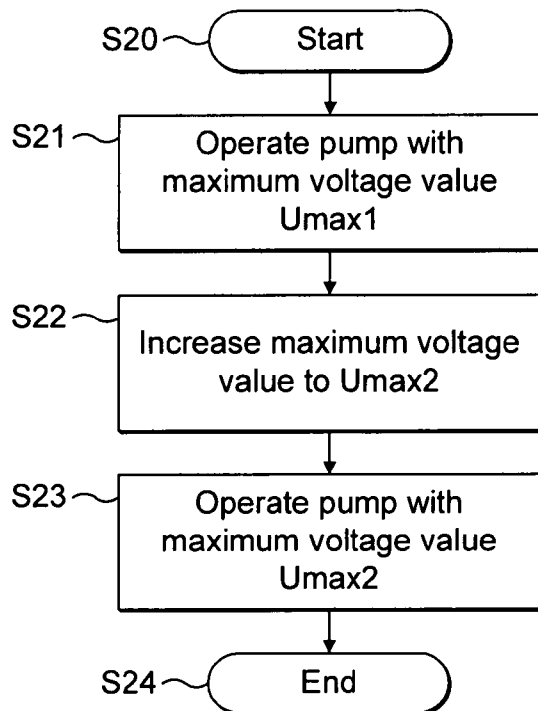


FIG. 4c

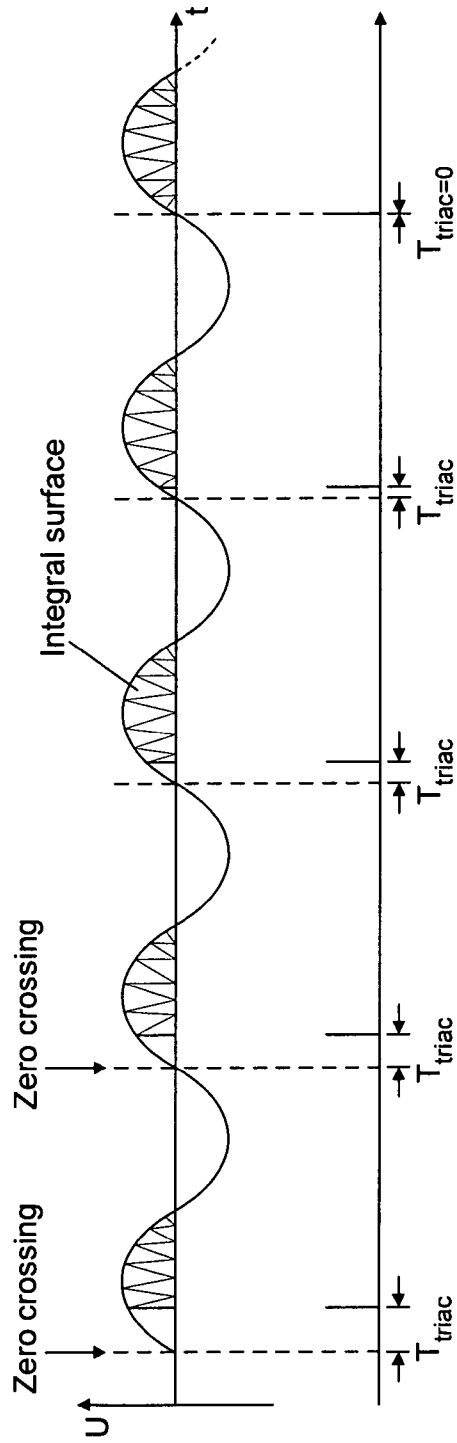


FIG. 5a

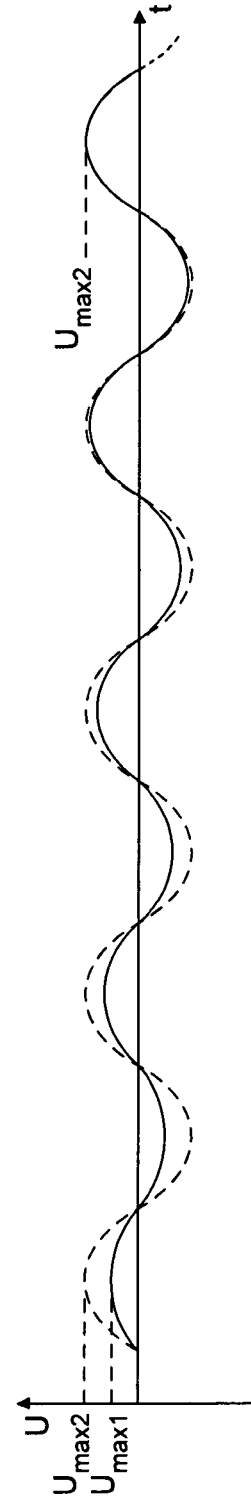


FIG. 5b

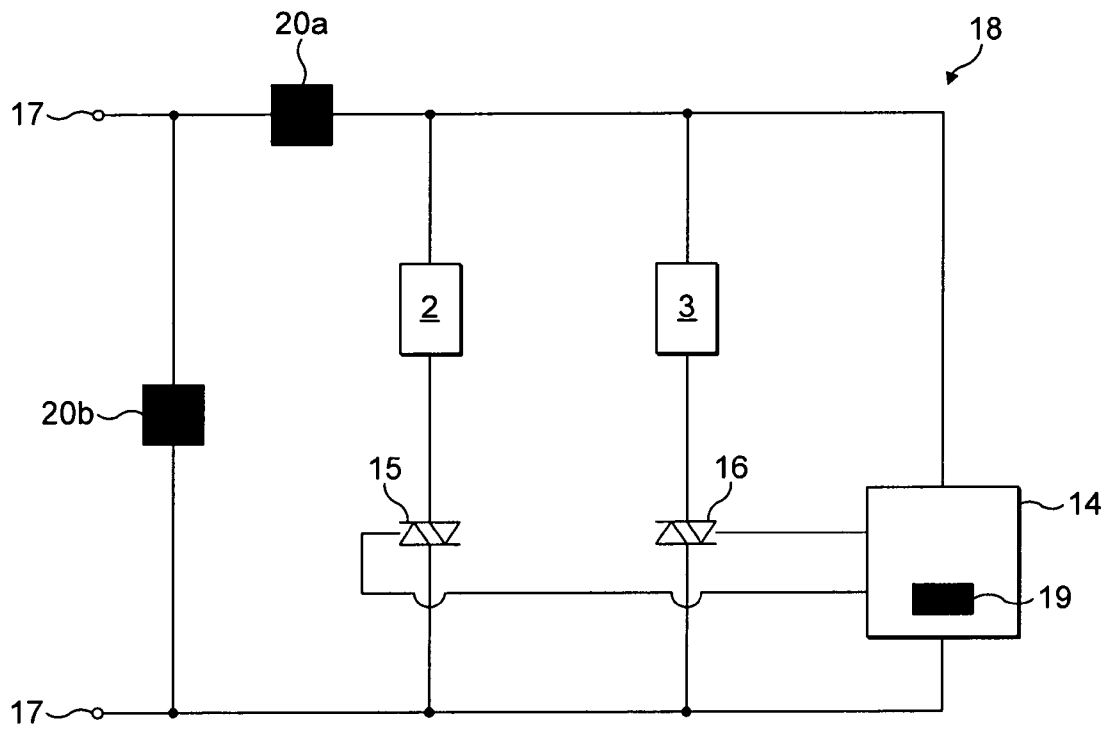


FIG. 6

7/7

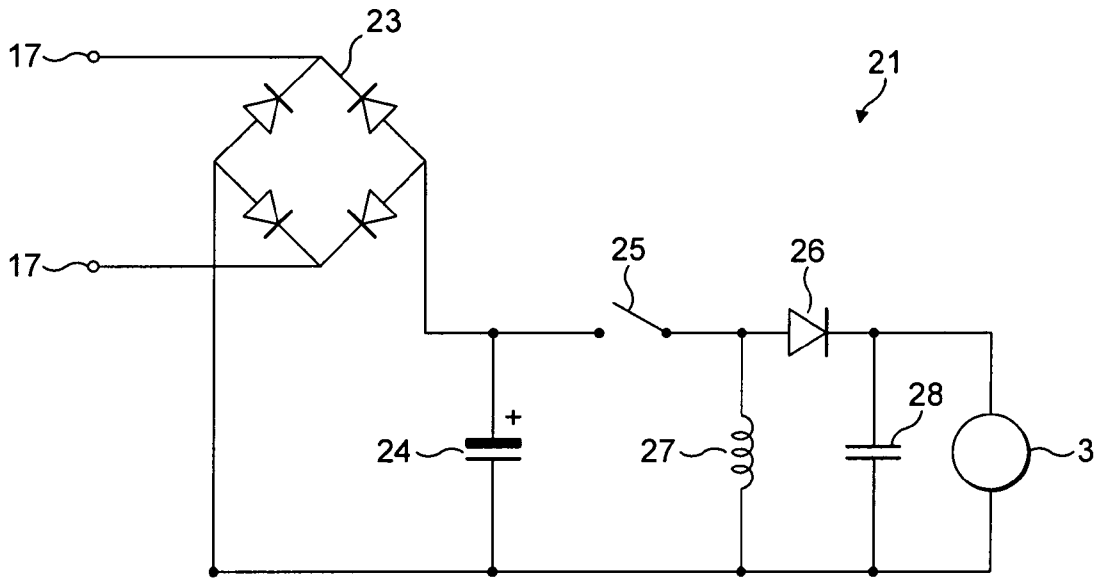


FIG. 7a

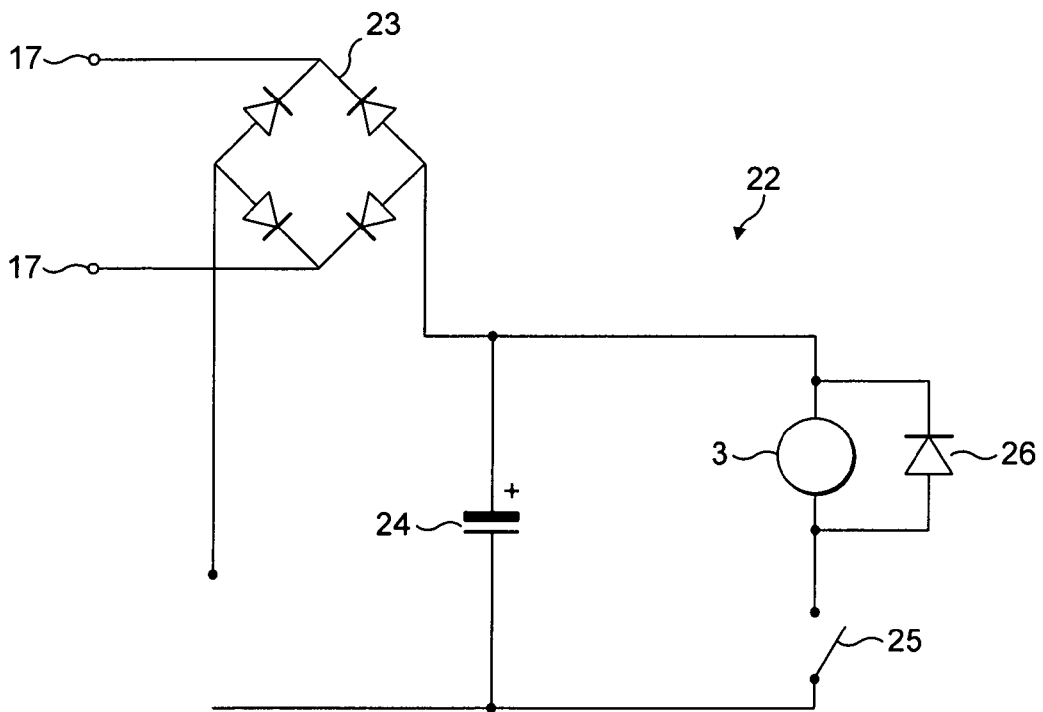


FIG. 7a

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2008/060555

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. A47J31/46
ADD. A47J31/36

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)
A47J

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 practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 1 498 058 A (ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS LTD [CN]) 19 January 2005 (2005-01-19) paragraph [0013]	1-13, 15-26
A	WO 2007/060694 A (SAECO IPR LTD [IE]; RIGHETTI MARCO [IT]) 31 May 2007 (2007-05-31) figures 16,17 paragraph [0061]	1, 9-11, 13, 25, 27
A	EP 1 210 893 A (SANDEN CORP [JP]) 5 June 2002 (2002-06-05) the whole document	1, 13, 25, 27

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
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *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.
- *Z* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

17 October 2008

Date of mailing of the international search report

27/10/2008

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

Sainz Martínez, M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2008/060555

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 1498058	A	19-01-2005	AT 369778 T 15-09-2007
			AU 2004203231 A1 03-02-2005
			CA 2475099 A1 18-01-2005
			DE 602004008163 T2 30-04-2008
			GB 2404846 A 16-02-2005
			HK 1072173 A1 03-02-2006
			JP 2005040605 A 17-02-2005
			US 2005011364 A1 20-01-2005
WO 2007060694	A	31-05-2007	AU 2005338558 A1 31-05-2007
			EP 1954169 A1 13-08-2008
EP 1210893	A	05-06-2002	NONE