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(54) **Idling speed control apparatus for internal combustion engine**

Vorrichtung zur Regelung der Leerlaufdrehzahl einer Brennkraftmaschine

Dispositif pour commander la vitesse de ralenti d'un moteur à combustion interne

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Description

[0001] This invention relates to an idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine according to the preamble of claim 1, and more particularly to an idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine which regulates the intake air amount by means of a step motor to control the speed of rotation of the internal combustion engine upon idling.

[0002] An idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine according to the preamble of claim 1 is known from US-A-4 747 379.

[0003] Generally, in an idling speed control apparatus for an engine, an idling speed control valve (ISCV) is in most cases provided midway of a bypass path provided separately from an intake path in such a manner as to bypass a throttle valve. By regulating the opening of the ISCV, the intake air amount of the internal combustion engine is controlled, independently of the throttle valve, to control the idling speed.

[0004] The ISCV described above is driven by a step motor, and the opening thereof is controlled by supplying to the step motor a pulse signal which corresponds to the difference between the present position of an idling regulation valve which is determined by the operation step number of the step motor from a reference position and a target position which depends upon the operation condition of the engine. Such a control method as just described is known, for example, by the official gazette of Japanese Patent Laid-open No. Sho 63-42106 and so forth.

[0005] In the prior art described above, in order to make it possible to simply make the opening of the idling regulation valve and the operation step number of the step motor correspond to each other without using a reference position sensor such as a potentiometer or a limit switch, a fixed pulse signal is provided to the step motor to drive the idling regulation valve to its fully closed or fully open position immediately after the ignition switch is disconnected, and the operation step number of the step motor is reset in order to use the fully closed or fully open position as a reference position.

[0006] However, according to such an initial processing method as just described, since the step motor must be rotated to the fully open or fully closed position after the engine ignition switch is interrupted, a battery for the initial processing must further be incorporated separately from an original battery.

[0007] It is an object of the present invention to provide an idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine using a step motor for actuating an idling valve which can perform positioning of the step motor accurately without additionally providing a reference position sensor or an operation step in which the step motor is reset in order to use the fully closed or fully open position of the idling valve as a reference position.

[0008] This object is achieved by an idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine accord-

ing to claim 1.

[0009] An idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine which includes an idling regulating valve for regulating the opening of an idling intake path and a step motor for driving the idling regulating valve to perform opening and closing movements and which controls the rotational position of the step motor to coincide with a rotational position corresponding to a target opening for the idling regulating valve comprises storage means for storing an idling reference step number, means for registering, upon starting of the engine, the idling reference step number as a present position step number which represents the present position of the step motor, means for driving the step motor based on a target position step number which represents a target position of the step motor and the present position step number, idling state discrimination means for discriminating whether or not the idling is in a steady state, means for rewriting the present position step number into a reference step number which is a predetermined constant when it is discriminated that the idling is in a steady state, and means for storing the present position step number as the idling reference step number when it is discriminated that the idling is in a steady state.

[0010] The opening of the idling regulation valve when idling is stable and in a steady state is determined uniquely, and even if the engine is stopped, the idling regulation valve is kept at the position. Thus, according to the characteristic described above, the rotational position of the step motor when idling is in a steady state is stored as the idling reference step number, and when the engine is started next, the rotational position of the step motor at the point of time is set to the idling reference step number stored in advance. Consequently, the relationship between the rotational position of the step motor and the operation step number which represents the present position of the step motor can be determined accurately without using a sensor.

[0011] According to the present invention, the following effects are achieved.

(1) Since the rotational position of the step motor when idling is in a steady state is set to a predetermined reference step number (Pidle) based on the empirical rule that the rotational position of a step motor when idling is stable and in a steady state is substantially fixed, the relationship between the present position of the step motor and the present position step number which represents the present position can be compensated for accurately without using a sensor.

(2) In a transition state in which the idling is not stable, the step number Px which represents the rotational position of the step motor at the current point of time is repetitively stored as the engine stop step number Pstop in a non-volatile fashion, and then when the engine is started next, the engine stop step number Pstop is initialized as the present position step

number P_x which represents the rotational position of the step motor at present. Accordingly, even if the engine is stopped in a state wherein the idling is not stable, the present position step number P_x and the present position of the step motor can be made correspond accurately to each other.

[0012] FIG. 1 is a schematic sectional view showing a configuration of a principal portion of an idling speed control apparatus to which the present invention is applied.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a functional block diagram showing a configuration of a controller of FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating operation of the present embodiment.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating operation of the present embodiment.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a time chart illustrating operation of the present embodiment.

[0017] FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating an example of a first warming-up table.

[0018] FIG. 7 is a diagram illustrating an example of a second warming-up table.

[0019] In the following, a preferred embodiment of the present invention is described with reference to the drawings. FIG. 1 is a schematic sectional view showing a configuration of a principal portion of an idling speed control apparatus to which the present invention is applied.

[0020] A throttle body 2 is mounted at an intermediate portion of an intake path which interconnects an air cleaner and an engine. On the throttle body 2, a throttle valve 3 which regulates the opening of the intake path is provided for pivotal motion, and also an idling intake path 4 which bypasses the throttle valve 3 is mounted. The idling intake path 4 introduces intake air for idling to the engine upon idling of the engine and an idling regulation valve 6 is mounted between the upstream side 4a and the downstream side 4b of the idling intake path 4.

[0021] The opening of the idling regulation valve 6 depends upon the rotational position of a step motor 1 which is driven with a pulse signal outputted from a controller 5. The controller 5 receives detection signals from a temperature sensor 7 which detects a cooling water temperature of the engine, an engine speed sensor 8 which detects an engine speed N_e , and a position sensor 9 which detects a gear position of a transmission, and controls the rotational position of the step motor 1.

[0022] As described in detail below, an engine stop step number P_{stop} which represents the rotational position of the step motor 1 upon last stopping of the engine is stored in a non-volatile EEPROM 11 which does not require backup power. Upon next starting of the engine, the controller 5 reads in the engine stop step number P_{stop} from the EEPROM 11, and supposes that the step number P_{stop} represents the rotational position of the step motor 1 at present (upon last engine stopping, that is, upon present engine starting) to start control.

[0023] FIG. 2 is a functional block diagram showing a configuration of the controller 5, and like elements to

those appearing as above are denoted by like or equivalent reference characters.

[0024] In the controller 5, an engine starting discrimination section 51 discriminates whether or not the engine is started. An idling state discrimination section 52 discriminates whether or not the idling is stabilized and settled in a steady state. A warming-up discrimination section 53 discriminates whether or not the engine is in a warming-up operation state.

[0025] A present position counter 54 counts a present position step number P_x which represents the rotational position of the step motor 1 at present. A target position step number P_t relating to the step motor 1 is registered into a target position counter 55. A motor driving section 56 supplies a driving pulse for forward rotation or reverse rotation to the step motor 1 so as to make the present position step number P_x and the target position step number P_t coincide with each other. The driving pulse is counted by the present position counter 54 and the present position step number P_x is incremented or decremented in accordance with the driving pulse.

[0026] Operation of the present embodiment is described below. FIGS. 3 and 4 are flow charts illustrating operation of the present embodiment and FIG. 5 is a time chart illustrating operation of the present embodiment.

[0027] If an ignition switch is switched on at time t_1 of FIG. 5, then the idling speed control of FIG. 3 starts. At step S1, the engine starting discrimination section 51 of the controller 5 discriminates whether or not the engine is in a starting state based on the engine speed N_e detected, for example, by the N_e sensor 8. In the present embodiment, when the engine speed N_e is 700 rpm or less, it is discriminated that the engine is in a starting state. In the beginning of the process, since it is discriminated that the engine is in a starting state, the process advances to step S11.

[0028] At step S11, as described in detail below, the engine stop step number P_{stop} which represents the rotational position of the step motor 1 upon last stopping of the engine is read out from the EEPROM 11 by the controller 5.

[0029] At step S12, the read out engine stop step number P_{stop} is registered as the present position step number P_x which represents the rotational position of the step motor 1 into the present position counter 54 of the controller 5.

[0030] At step S13, a warming-up step number P_{add} for temporarily raising the idling speed upon warming-up operation is detected based on the present cooling water temperature T_e detected by the temperature sensor 7 with reference to a first warming-up table 101 of a ROM 10.

[0031] FIG. 6 is a graph showing an example of the first warming-up table in the present embodiment. The warming-up step number P_{add} increases as the cooling water temperature T_e decreases.

[0032] At step S14, an idling reference step number P_{idle} (50 steps in the present embodiment) fixedly de-

terminated in advance as a reference step number upon idling is read out from the ROM 10.

[0033] At step S15, a sum value $[Pidle + (Padd - Pstop)]$ of the idling reference step number $Pidle$ and a value obtained by subtracting the engine stop step number $Pstop$ from the warming-up step number $Padd$ is registered as a present target position step number Pt into the target position counter 55 of the controller 5.

[0034] At step S16, the present position step number Px is stored as the engine stop step number $Pstop$ into the EEPROM 11. At step S17, the step motor 1 is controlled by the motor driving section 56 of the controller 5 so that the target position step number Pt and the present position step number Px coincide with each other.

Then, the engine is started at time $t2$ of FIG. 5, and when the starting of the engine is detected in step S1 described above, the process advances to step S2. At step S2, whether or not the engine is in a no-load state is discriminated based on, for example, the gear position detected by the gear position sensor 9. If the gear position is the neutral position, then it is discriminated that the engine is in a no-load state, and the process advances to step S3.

[0035] At step S3, whether or not the engine is in an idling state is discriminated based on, for example, the engine speed Ne and the throttle opening. If the engine speed Ne is lower than a predetermined reference speed and the throttle opening is lower than a predetermined reference opening, then it is discriminated that the engine is in an idling state, and the process advances to step S4. It is to be noted that, if any one of the discriminations in steps S2 and S3 results in the negative, then the process advances to a running mode of step S10.

[0036] At step S4, it is discriminated by the warming-up discrimination section 53 of the controller 5 based on, for example, the water temperature Te of cooling water whether or not the engine is in a warming-up state. In the beginning of the process, the water temperature Te is low and it is discriminated that the engine is in a warming-up state, and the process advances to step S5. At step S5, an upper limit value $Nmax1$ and a lower limit value $Nmin1$ of a target idling speed range are determined based on a second warming-up table, of which an example is shown in FIG. 7, and the water temperature Te .

[0037] At steps S6 and S7, it is discriminated whether or not the engine speed Ne is higher than the upper limit value $Nmax1$ and whether or not the engine speed Ne is lower than the lower limit value $Nmin1$, respectively. If the engine speed Ne reaches the upper limit value $Nmax1$ as at time $t3$ of FIG. 5, the target position step number Pt is decremented at step S8. On the contrary if the engine speed Ne drops to the lower limit value $Nmin1$, then the target position step number Pt is incremented at step S9. If the engine speed Ne is within the range between the upper and lower limit values, then the process advances immediately to step S16 et seq.

[0038] The processes described above are repeated as long as it is discriminated at step S4 that the engine is in a warming-up state, and within the period, the cooling

water temperature Te rises gradually. Accordingly, also the upper limit value $Nmax1$ and the lower limit value $Nmin1$ of the target idling speed range determined at step S5 described above gradually drop, and therefore, also the engine speed Ne gradually drops as shown in FIG. 5.

[0039] Thereafter, if the water temperature Te exceeds the predetermined reference temperature at time $t4$ of FIG. 5, then since it is discriminated at the next step S4 that the engine is not in a warming-up state, the process advances to step S21 of FIG. 4.

[0040] At step S21, an idling stability flag $Fidle$ is referred to. The idling stability flag $Fidle$ is set, as herein-after described in detail, when idling is stabilized and it is discriminated that the idling is in a steady state. Since, in the beginning of the process, the idling is in a transition state and the idling stability flag $Fidle$ is in a reset state, the process advances to step S22. At step S22, the target rotational range for the engine speed Ne is set to a rather narrow value ΔNn .

[0041] At step S23, it is discriminated whether or not the engine speed Ne has converged to a value within the target rotational range ΔNn . Since, in the beginning of the process, it is discriminated that the engine speed Ne has not converged, the process advances to step S28.

At step S28, the idling stability flag $Fidle$ is reset. At step S29, it is discriminated whether or not the engine speed Ne is higher than the upper limit value to the target rotational range ΔNn . If the engine speed Ne reaches the upper limit value as at time $t5$ of FIG. 5, then the target position step number Pt is decremented at step S30, whereafter the process advances to step S16 et seq. On the contrary, if the engine speed Ne is lower than the upper limit value, then the target position step number Pt is incremented at step S31, whereafter the process advances to step S16 et seq.

[0042] At steps S16 and S17, the present position step number Px is stored as the engine stop step number $Pstop$ into the EEPROM 11 in a similar manner as described hereinabove, and motor control for making the present position step number Px coincide with the target position step number Pt is performed.

[0043] Thereafter, the engine speed Ne converges to a value within the target rotational range ΔNn . When this is detected at step S23 described hereinabove, then the process advances to step S24. At step S24, the idling stability flag $Fidle$ is referred to again, and if the idling stability flag $Fidle$ is in a reset state, then the process advances to step S25. At step S25, the present position step number Px of the present position counter 54 and the target position step number Pt of the target position counter 55 are rewritten uniformly by the idling reference step number $Pidle$ ($= 50$) irrespective of the step number at present. At step S26, the idling stability flag $Fidle$ is set.

[0044] At the following steps S16 and S17, the present position step number Px is stored as the engine stop step number $Pstop$ into the EEPROM 11 in a similar manner as described hereinabove, and motor control for making the present position step number Px coincide with the

target position step number P_t is performed.

[0045] In this manner, in the present embodiment, the rotational position of the step motor when idling is in a steady state is set to a predetermined reference step number (P_{idle}) based on the empirical rule that the absolute rotational position of a step motor when idling is stable and in a steady state is substantially fixed. Therefore, the relationship between the present position of the step motor and the present position step number which represents the present position can be compensated for accurately without using a sensor.

[0046] To provide an idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine which can perform positioning of a step motor accurately without additionally providing a battery.

The idling speed control apparatus includes storage means 11 for storing an engine stop step number P_{stop} , means for driving the step motor based on a target position step number P_t which represents a target position of the step motor and a present position step number P_x which represents the present position of the step motor, and idling state discrimination means 52 for discriminating whether or not the idling is in a steady state. Upon starting of the engine, the engine stop step number P_{stop} is registered as the present position step number, and when it is discriminated that the idling is in a steady state, the present position step number is rewritten into a reference step number which is a predetermined constant and the present position step number is stored as the idling reference step number.

present position step number (P_x) as an engine stop step number (P_{stop}) in a non-volatile manner;

means (5) for keeping the step motor (1) and the idling regulating valve (6) at the present position upon stopping of the engine;

means (5) for adopting the engine stop step number (P_{stop}) as the present position step number (P_x) upon engine starting;

storage means (10) for storing a predetermined idling reference step number (P_{idle}) fixedly determined in advance; and

means (5) for rewriting the present position step number (P_x) and the target position step number (P_t) by the predetermined idling reference step number (P_{idle}) when it is discriminated that the idling is in a steady state.

2. An idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine according to claim 1, **characterized in that** said means (11) for storing the engine stop step number (P_{stop}) is a non-volatile memory.

3. An idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** it comprises means (7) for detecting a cooling water temperature (T_e) upon engine starting, and means for correcting the target position step number based on the detected cooling water temperature.

Claims

1. An idling speed control apparatus for an internal combustion engine which includes an idling regulating valve (6) for regulating the opening of an idling intake path (4) and a step motor (1) for driving said idling regulating valve (6) to perform opening and closing movements and which controls the rotational position of said step motor (1) to coincide with a rotational position corresponding to a target opening for said idling regulating valve (6), comprising:

means (5) for driving said step motor (1) based on a target position step number (P_t) which represents a target position of said step motor (1) and a present position step number (P_x) which represents a present position of the step motor (1); and
idling state discrimination means (52) for discriminating whether or not the idling is in a steady state,

characterized in that the idling speed control apparatus further comprises:

storage means (11) for repetitively storing the

Patentansprüche

1. Leerlaufdrehzahl-Steuer/Regelvorrichtung für einen Verbrennungsmotor, welche ein Leerlauf-Stellventil (6) umfasst zum Einstellen der Öffnung eines Leerlauf-Ansaugwegs (4) und einen Schrittmotor (1) umfasst zum Antreiben des Leerlauf-Stellventils (6), um Öffnungs- und Schließbewegungen durchzuführen, und welche die Drehposition des Schrittmotors (1) derart steuert/regelt, dass diese mit einer Drehposition übereinstimmt, welche einer Soll-Öffnung des Leerlauf-Stellventils (6) entspricht, umfassend:

Mittel (5) zum Antreiben des Schrittmotors (1) basierend auf einer Soll-Position-Schrittzahl (P_t), welche eine Soll-Position des Schrittmotors (1) darstellt, und einer Ist-Position-Schrittzahl (P_x), welche eine Ist-Position des Schrittmotors (1) darstellt; und
Leerlaufzustand-Unterscheidungsmittel (52) zum Unterscheiden, ob sich der Leerlauf in einem stabilen Zustand befindet oder nicht,

dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die Leerlaufdrehzahl-Steuer/Regelvorrichtung ferner umfasst:

- Speichermittel (11) zum wiederholten Speichern der Ist-Position-Schrittzahl (Px) als eine Motor-Stopp-Schrittzahl (Pstop) in einer permanenten Art und Weise;
- Mittel (5) zum Halten des Schrittmotors (1) und des Leerlauf-Stellventils (6) in der Ist-Position beim Stopp des Motors;
- Mittel (5) zum Übernehmen der Motor-Stopp-Schrittzahl (Pstop) als die Ist-Position-Schrittzahl (Px) beim Start des Motors;
- Speichermittel (10) zum Speichern einer vorherbestimmten Leerlauf-Referenz-Schrittzahl (Pidle), welche im Voraus fest bestimmt ist; und
- Mittel (5) zum Umschreiben der Ist-Position-Schrittzahl (Px) und der Soll-Position-Schrittzahl (Pt) durch die vorherbestimmte Leerlauf-Referenz-Schrittzahl (Pidle), wenn unterschieden ist, dass sich der Leerlauf in einem stabilen Zustand befindet.
2. Leerlaufdrehzahl-Steuer/Regelvorrichtung für einen Verbrennungsmotor nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Mittel (11) zum Speichern der Motor-Stopp-Schrittzahl (Pstop) ein Permanent-speicher sind.
3. Leerlaufdrehzahl-Steuer/Regelvorrichtung für einen Verbrennungsmotor nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** sie umfasst Mittel (7) zum Erfassen einer Kühlwassertemperatur (Te) beim Start des Motors, und Mittel zum Korrigieren der Soll-Position-Schrittzahl basierend auf der erfassten Kühlwassertemperatur.

Revendications

1. Appareil de commande de vitesse de ralenti pour un moteur à combustion interne qui inclut une soupape régulatrice de ralenti (6) permettant de réguler l'ouverture d'un passage d'admission de ralenti (4) et un moteur pas à pas (1) permettant d'entraîner ladite soupape régulatrice de ralenti (6) pour effectuer des mouvements d'ouverture et de fermeture et qui commande la position de rotation dudit moteur pas à pas (1) pour qu'elle coïncide avec une position de rotation correspondant à une ouverture cible pour ladite soupape régulatrice de ralenti (6), comprenant :
- un moyen (5) permettant d'entraîner ledit moteur pas à pas (1) d'après un nombre de pas de position cible (Pt) qui représente une position cible dudit moteur pas à pas (1) et un présent nombre de pas de position (Px) qui représente une présente position du moteur pas à pas (1) ;
- et
- un moyen de détermination d'état de ralenti (52)

permettant de déterminer si le ralenti est ou non dans un régime permanent,

caractérisé en ce que l'appareil de commande de vitesse de ralenti comprend en outre :

un moyen de stockage (11) pour stocker de façon répétitive le présent nombre de pas de position (Px) comme un nombre de pas d'arrêt de moteur (Pstop) de manière non volatile ;

un moyen (5) pour maintenir le moteur pas à pas (1) et la soupape régulatrice de ralenti (6) à la présente position lors d'un arrêt du moteur ;

un moyen (5) pour adopter le nombre de pas d'arrêt de moteur (Pstop) comme le présent nombre de pas de position (Px) lors d'un démarrage du moteur ;

un moyen de stockage (10) pour stocker un nombre de pas de référence de ralenti prédéterminé (Pidle) déterminé fixement à l'avance ;

et

un moyen (5) pour réécrire le présent nombre de pas de position (Px) et le nombre de pas de position cible (Pt) par le nombre de pas de référence de ralenti prédéterminé (Pidle) lorsqu'il est déterminé que le ralenti est dans un régime permanent.

2. Appareil de commande de vitesse de ralenti pour un moteur à combustion interne selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que** ledit moyen (11) pour stocker le nombre de pas d'arrêt de moteur (Pstop) est une mémoire non volatile.

3. Appareil de commande de vitesse de ralenti pour un moteur à combustion interne selon la revendication 1 ou 2, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comprend
- un moyen (7) pour détecter une température d'eau de refroidissement (Te) lors d'un démarrage du moteur, et
- un moyen pour corriger le nombre de pas de position cible d'après la température d'eau de refroidissement détectée.

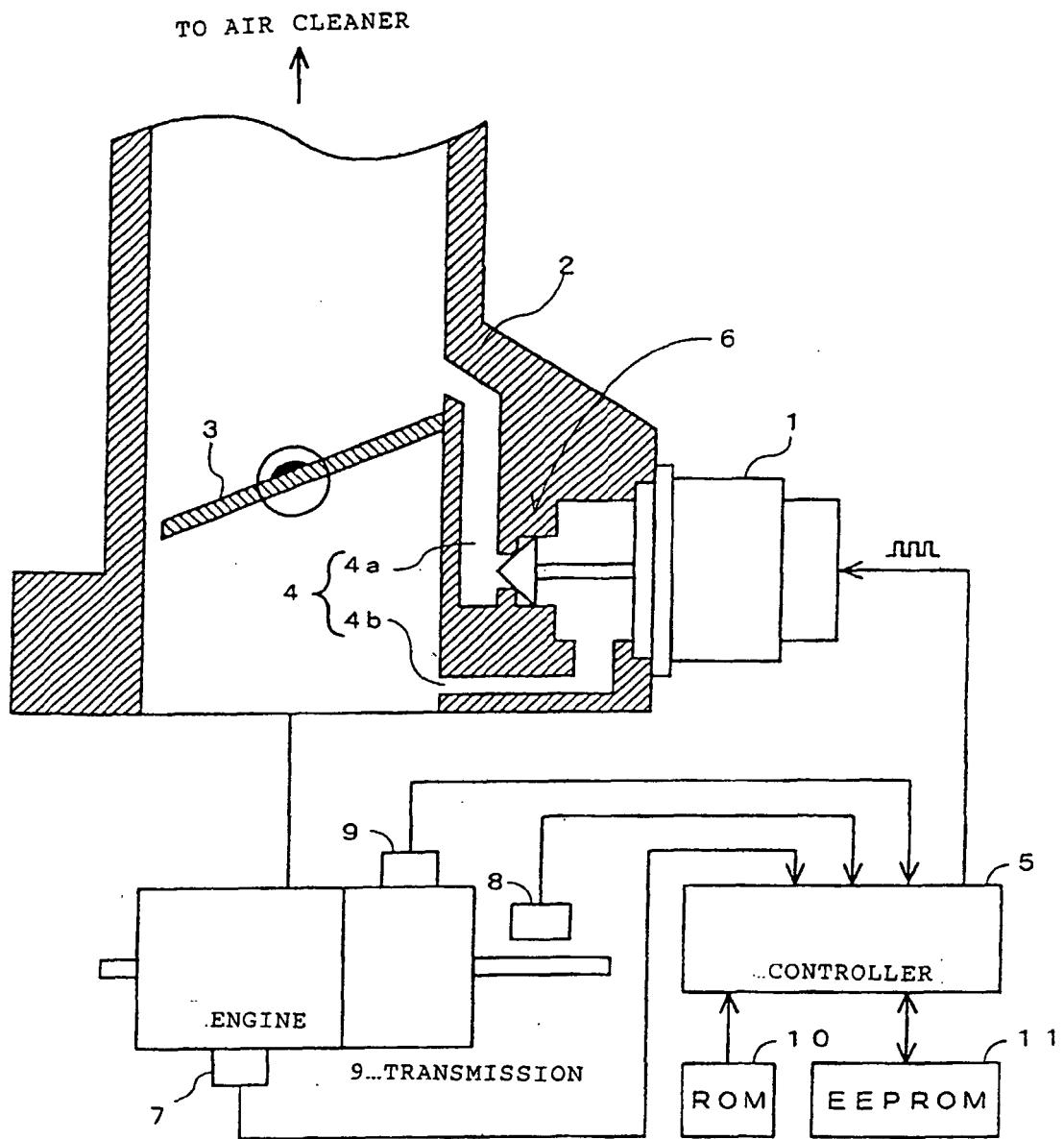
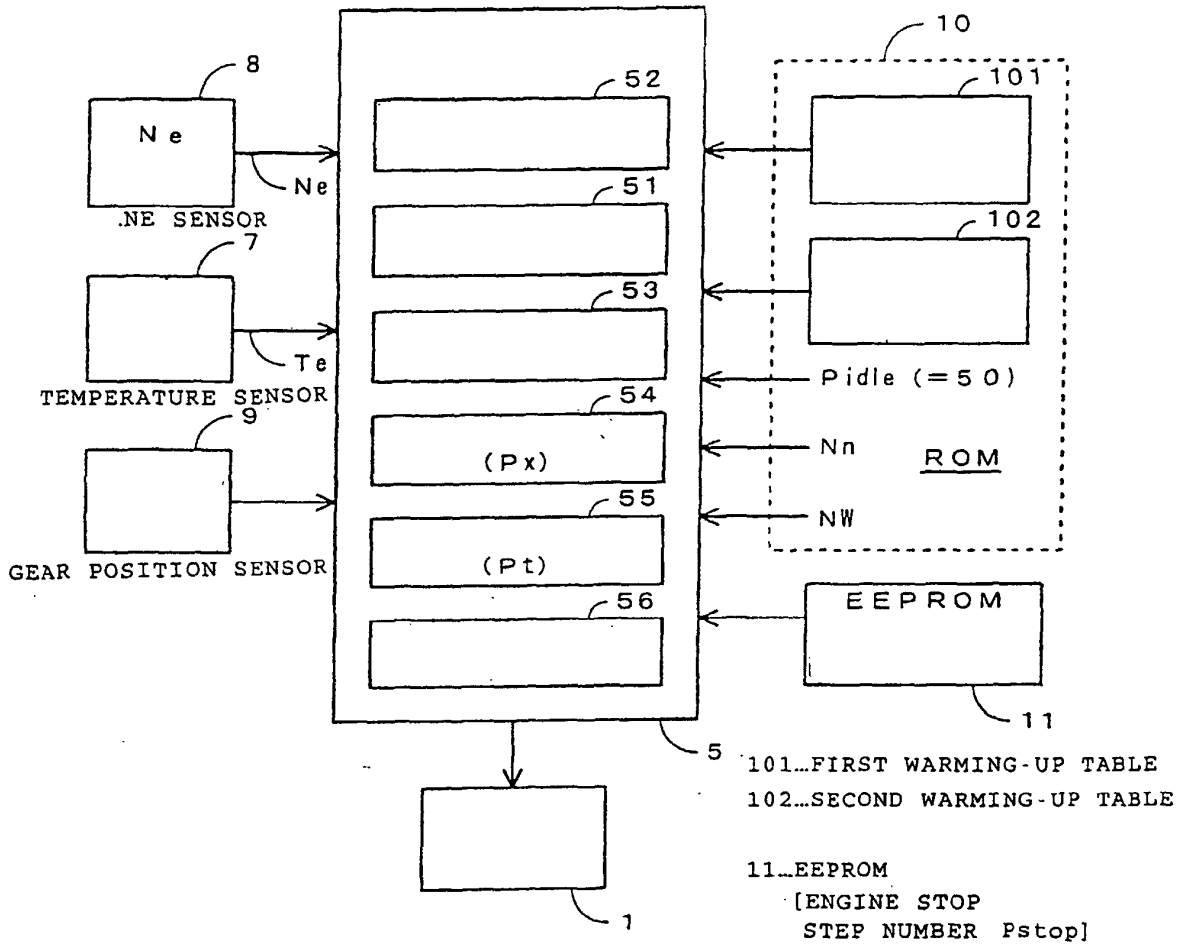
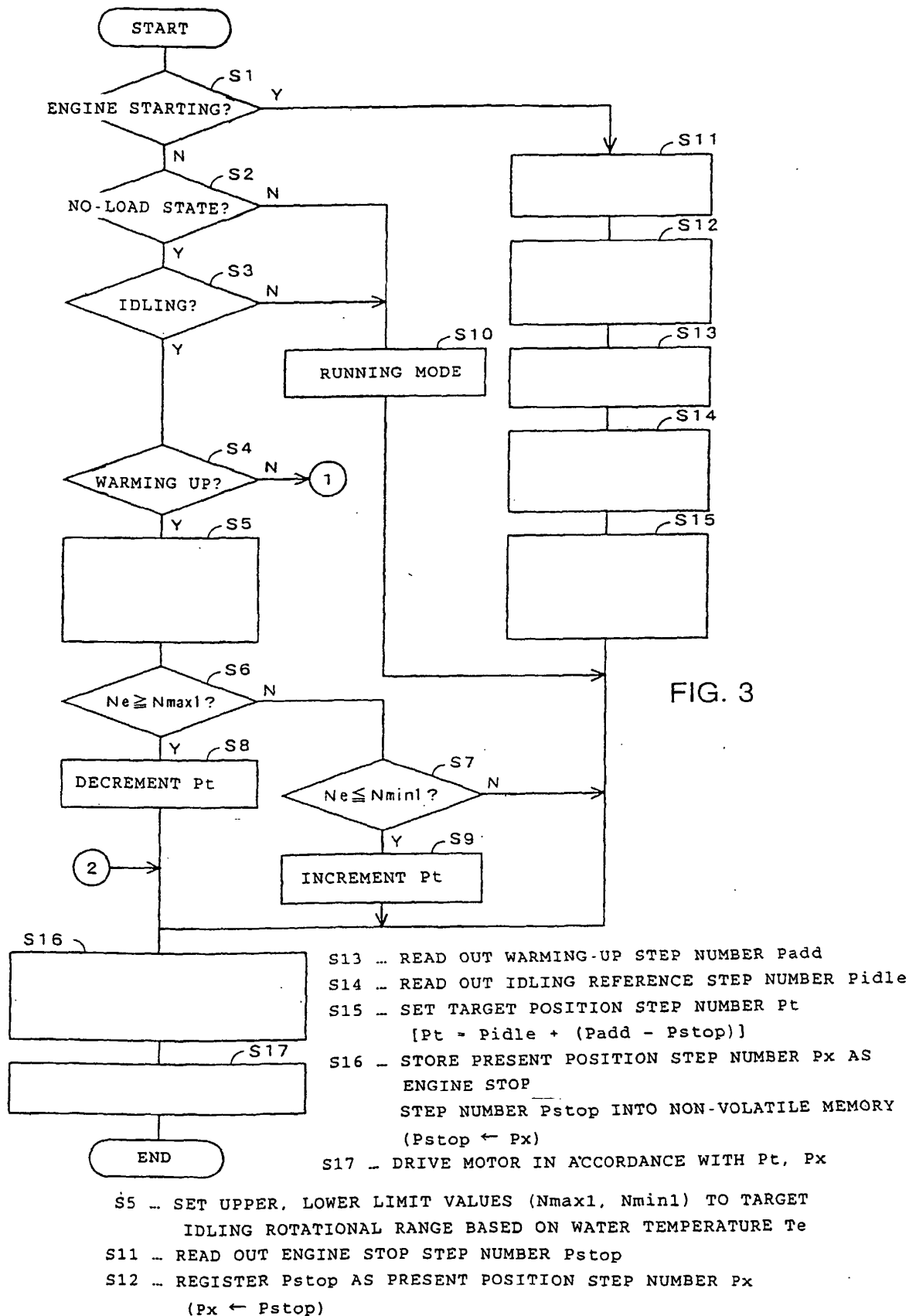


FIG. 1



5...CONTROLLER
52...IDLING STATE DISCRIMINATION SECTION
51...ENGINE STARTING DISCRIMINATION SECTION
53...WARMING-UP DISCRIMINATION SECTION
54...PRESENT POSITION COUNTER (Px)
55...TARGET POSITION COUNTER (Pt)
56...MOTOR DRIVING SECTION
1...STEP MOTOR

FIG. 2



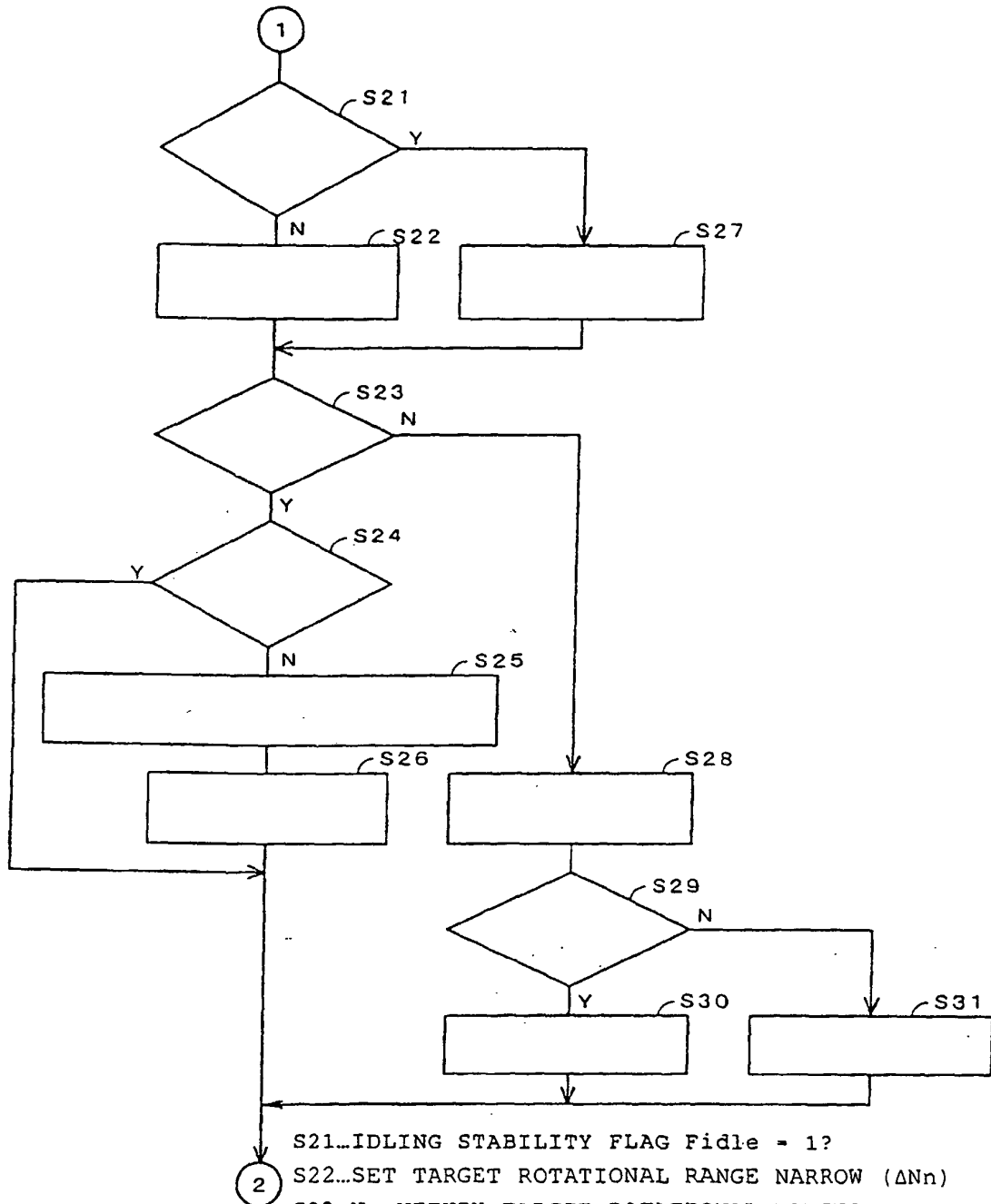


FIG. 4

S21...IDLING STABILITY FLAG Fidle = 1?
 S22...SET TARGET ROTATIONAL RANGE NARROW (ΔNn)
 S23...Ne WITHIN TARGET ROTATIONAL RANGE?
 S24...IDLING STABILITY FLAG Fidle = 1?
 S25...PRESENT POSITION STEP NUMBER Px
 S26...SET IDLING STABILITY FLAG Fidle
 S27...SET TARGET ROTATIONAL RANGE WIDE (ΔNw)
 S28...RESET IDLING STABILITY FLAG Fidle
 S29...Ne EXCESSIVELY HIGH?
 S30...DECREMENT Pt
 S31...INCREMENT Pt

Pidle (= 50)

TARGET POSITION STEP NUMBER Pt

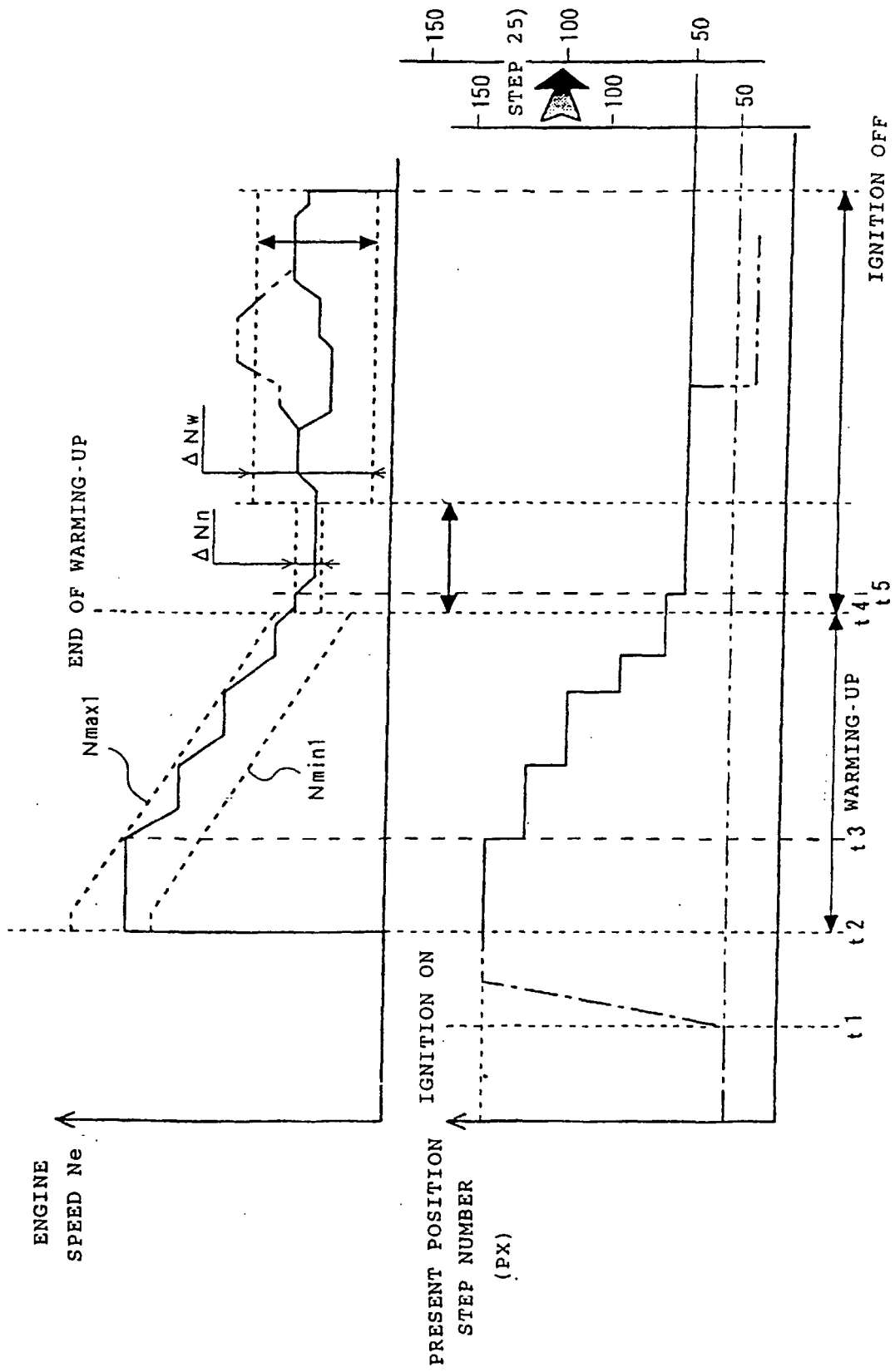
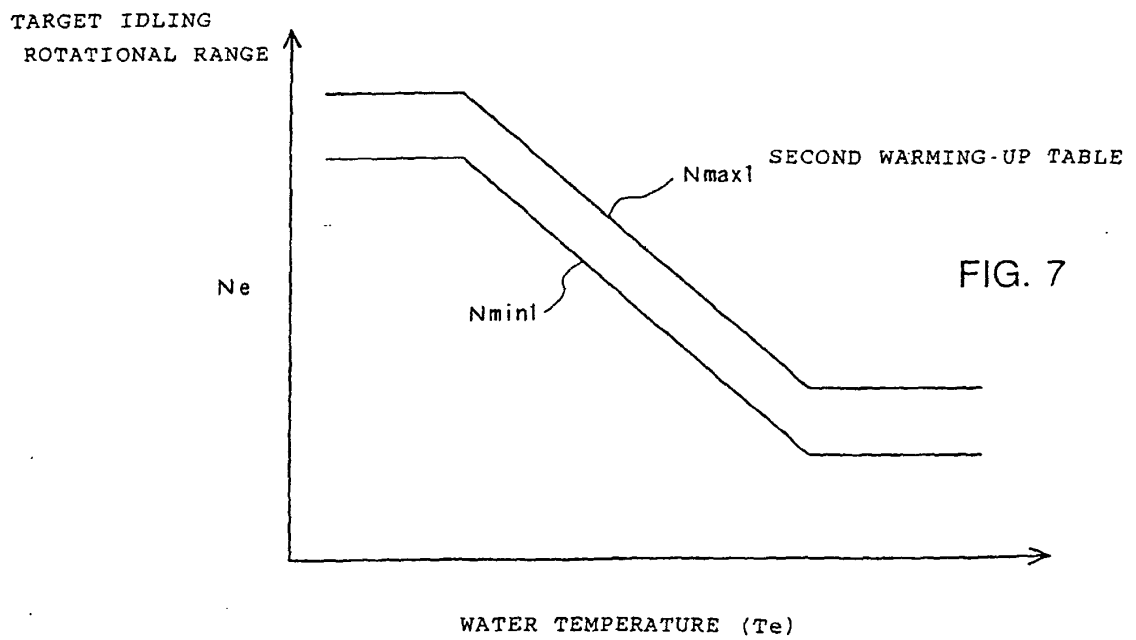
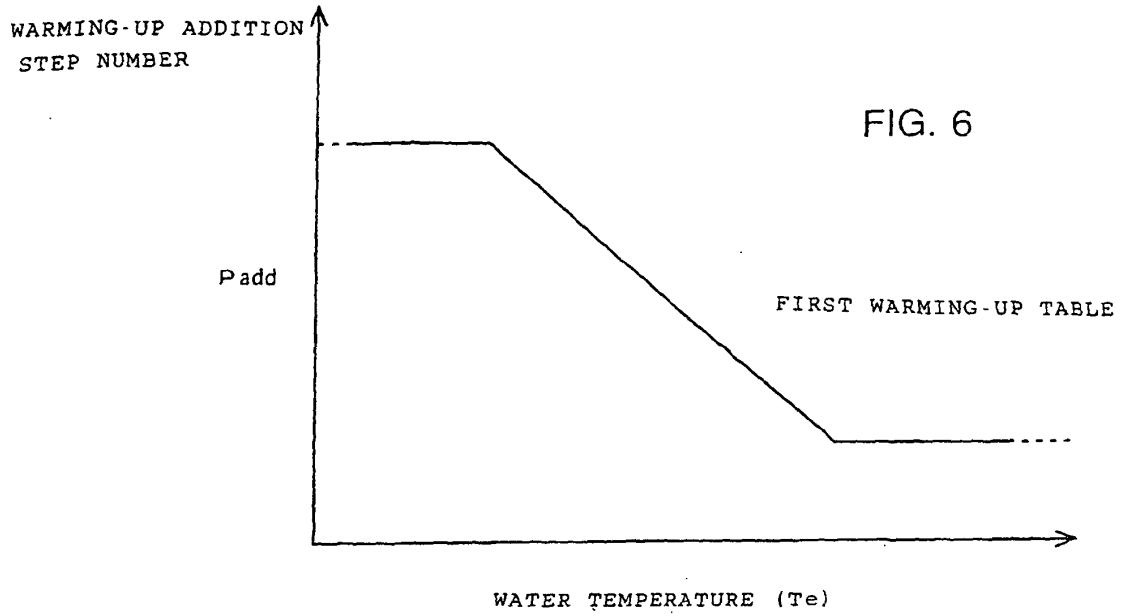


FIG. 5



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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