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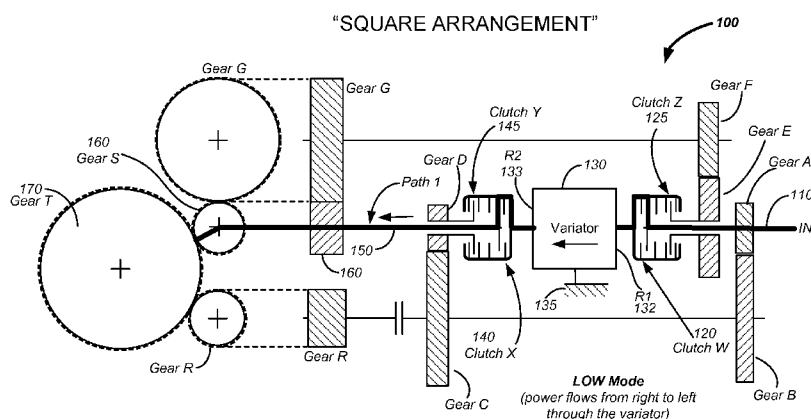
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**FIG. 1A**

(57) **Abstract:** A continuously variable transmission provides an increased transmission speed ratio with fewer parts. A kinematic arrangement can provide at least a squared kinematic arrangement of the variator for two or more modes, for example, and can provide an increased range transmission speed ratio with fewer moving parts. In many embodiments, the continuously variable transmission provides synchronous gear ratios and a continuously variable speed ratio.

CONTINUOUSLY VARIABLE TRANSMISSION

CROSS-REFERENCE

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/727,689, filed November 17, 2012, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/779,579, filed March 13, 2013, which applications are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Transmissions can be used to vary the ratio of rotation of an input shaft to an output shaft. This variation of input rotation to output rotation can provide increased performance. The transmission speed ratio of at least some prior transmission can be discrete, for example with fixed gear ratios, which can make switching gears less than desirable. Recently, continuously variable transmissions have been proposed to provide a continuously variable transition speed ratio. The continuously variable transmission speed ratio can have the advantage of providing a smoother and continuous transition from a low speed ratio to a high speed ratio. However, the prior continuously variable transmissions can be more complex than would be ideal.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Embodiments of the present invention provide an improved continuously variable transmission. In many embodiments, the continuously variable transmission provides an increased transmission speed ratio with fewer parts. In many embodiments, a kinematic arrangement can provide a CVT speed ratio greater than the variator speed ratio based on a change in direction of a power flow through the variator at each mode change, and the input shaft of the variator can be coaxial with the output shaft of the variator, or non-coaxial with the output shaft of the variator. A squared kinematic arrangement of the variator can provide an increased range transmission speed ratio, such that the transmission overall ratio corresponds to the variator ratio squared. A cubed kinematic arrangement of the variator for three modes can provide an increased range transmission speed ratio, such that the transmission overall ratio corresponds to the variator ratio cubed. In many embodiments, additional modes can be provided to increase the overall ratio of the transmission even further so as to correspond to the variator ratio raised to a power equal to the number of modes. In many embodiments, the continuously variable transmission provides synchronous gear ratios and a continuously variable speed ratio.

[0004] In one aspect a continuously variable transmission comprises an input shaft, an output shaft and a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk. The first disk is coaxial with the second disk. One or more shafts and a plurality of gears are configured to operatively engage the

input shaft and the output shaft. A first clutch is connected to the input shaft to engage the first disk. A third clutch is connected to the output shaft to engage the second disk. In a first configuration, the first clutch engages the first disk and the third clutch engages the second disk to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a first direction from the first disk to the second disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft. In a second configuration, the one or more shafts and the plurality of gears operatively engages the input shaft and the output shaft to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a second direction from the second disk to the first disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft, the first direction opposite the second direction.

[0005] In some embodiments a continuously variable transmission comprises an input shaft, an output shaft, a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk, the first disk coaxial with the second disk, one or more shafts and a plurality of gears configured to operatively engage the input shaft and the output shaft, a first clutch connected to the input shaft to engage the first disk and a third clutch connected to the output shaft to engage the second disk, wherein in a first configuration the first clutch engages the first disk and the third clutch engages the second disk to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a first direction from the first disk to the second disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft.

[0006] In some embodiments, a continuously variable transmission comprises an input shaft, an output shaft, a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk, the first disk coaxial with the second disk, one or more shafts and a plurality of gears configured to operatively engage the input shaft and the output shaft, a fourth clutch and a second clutch, and the plurality of gears operatively engages the output shaft and the input shaft to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a second direction from the second disk to the first disk in order to connect the output shaft to the input shaft, the second direction opposite the first direction.

[0007] In some embodiments, a continuously variable transmission is disclosed wherein the input shaft, the output shaft and the variator extend along a common axis, the first disk located along the axis toward the input shaft, the second disk located along the axis toward the output shaft and wherein the first configuration comprises a direct configuration such that rotational energy is transmitted along the axis in the first direction from the input shaft to the output path.

[0008] In some embodiments, the continuously variable transmission is disclosed wherein the one or more shafts comprises a first countershaft connected to a first plurality of gears and a second countershaft connected to a second plurality of gears and wherein rotational energy is transmitted from the input shaft to the second disk with the first countershaft connected to the

first plurality of gears and wherein rotational energy is transmitted from the first disk to the output shaft with the second countershaft connected to the second plurality of gears.

[0009] In some embodiments of the continuously variable transmission the first configuration comprises a low mode and the second configuration comprises a high mode. In other embodiments, of the continuously variable transmission the first configuration comprises a high mode and the second configuration comprises a low mode.

[0010] In some embodiments of the continuously variable transmission, the variator comprises a speed ratio and wherein the one or more shafts and the plurality of gears are configured to provide a synchronous shift when the variator comprises a maximum speed ratio.

[0011] In some embodiments of the continuously variable transmission, the first configuration and the second configuration are configured to provide synchronous gear ratios when the variator provides the maximum speed ratio or a minimum speed ratio and wherein a third clutch is configured to operatively engage the first ring and a fourth clutch is configured to engage the second ring and wherein the third clutch is configured to operatively connect to a gear on a downstream end of the second shaft and the fourth clutch is configured to connected to a gear on an upstream end of the second shaft to transmit energy in the second direction from second ring to the first ring.

[0012] In still other embodiments, the continuously variable transmission, the gear tooth counts have been selected so that a product of a gear on a downstream end of the second shaft times a gear on the input shaft divided by a product of a gear on an upstream end of the second shaft times a gear operatively connected to a fourth clutch is equal to a variator overdrive ratio and a product of a gear on a downstream end of the first shaft times a gear operatively connected to a third clutch divided by the product of a gear on the output shaft times a gear on an upstream end of the first shaft is equal to the variator overdrive ratio in order to provide the synchronous shift.

[0013] In still other embodiments, of the continuously variable transmission, the transmission is configured to make a synchronous shift at an underdrive ratio and wherein a product of a gear on a downstream end of the second shaft times a gear on the input shaft divided by a product of a gear on an upstream end of the second shaft times a gear operatively connected to a third clutch is equal to a variator underdrive ratio and a product of a gear on a downstream end of the first shaft times a gear operatively connected to a third clutch divided by a product of a gear on the output shaft times a gear on an upstream end of the first shaft is equal to the variator underdrive ratio in order to provide the synchronous shift at the underdrive ratio.

[0014] In another aspect, a continuously variable transmission is described wherein the variator comprises a plurality of rotatable balls configured to provide a continuously variable ratio of rotation of the input to the output disk in response to tilt angle of the plurality of rotatable balls.

[0015] Provided herein is a method for providing a continuously variable transmission comprising an input shaft, an output shaft, a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk, the first disk coaxial with the second disk, one or more shafts and a plurality of gears configured to operatively engage the input shaft and the output shaft, a first clutch connected to the input shaft to engage the first disk, and a second clutch connected to the output shaft to engage the second disk, wherein in a first configuration the first clutch engages the first disk and the second clutch engages the second disk to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a first direction from the first disk to the second disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft.

[0016] In another aspect of the method, the one or more shafts and the plurality of gears operatively engages the input shaft and the output shaft to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a second direction from the second disk to the first disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft, the first direction opposite the first direction.

[0017] In another aspect of the method, the transmission also has a reverse mode. In the reverse mode, the power from the launch device will be taken off the input shaft and transferred to the lower counter shaft. This results in the lower counter shaft spinning backwards at half of the input shaft speed. Power is taken off the lower counter shaft by applying the reverse clutch which directs power to a reverse gear in mesh with the axle shaft rotation gear in specific embodiments. The reverse ratio should generally be the same ratio as maximum underdrive but in the opposite direction.

[0018] In many embodiments, power does not go through the variator in the reverse mode.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0019] All publications, patents, and patent applications mentioned in this specification are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent, or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The novel features of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. A better understanding of the features and advantages of the present invention will be obtained by reference to the following detailed description that sets forth illustrative embodiments, in which the principles of the invention are utilized, and the accompanying drawings of which:

[0021] Figure 1A shows a square arrangement of a continuously variable transmission with power flow through the variator in a first direction, in accordance with embodiments;

[0022] Figure 1B shows a high mode of the continuously variable transmission of Figure 1A with power flow through the variator in a second direction opposite the first direction, in accordance with embodiments;

[0023] Figure 1C shows a reverse mode of a continuously variable transmission of Figure 1A with power flow bypassing the variator in a first direction through a lower counter shaft, in accordance with embodiments;

[0024] Figure 2A depicts certain elements of an embodiment CVP in accordance with embodiments;

[0025] Figure 2B depicts a ratio change mechanism in an embodiment CVP in accordance with embodiments;

[0026] Figure 3 shows a graph of the transmission speed ratio on the X axis and the variator speed ratio on the Y axis, in accordance with embodiments;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] Continuously variable transmissions (CVT) typically incorporate a variator that is capable of producing a limited speed ratio in only one direction. Some prior continuously variable transmissions have less than ideal speed ratio ranges and more parts than would be ideal. At least some of the prior continuously variable transmissions rely on more modes and more gears than would be ideal to provide a beneficial range of the continuously variable speed ratio. For example, some prior continuously variable transmissions may be configured in a manner that results in a variator which has a 4:1 overall ratio to perform as a 2:1 overall transmission ratio. Also, at least some of the prior continuously variable transmissions may have reduced input torque capacity and additional modes and gears to counteract the reduced variator overall ratio range.

[0028] In at least some instances, prior continuously variable transmissions have less than ideal sizes and form factors which can make the prior continuously variable transmissions difficult to use. For example, motor vehicles and bicycles can provide limited amounts of space for placement of a transmission. Further, weight can be an important consideration and the prior continuously variable transmissions may be larger and heavier than would be ideal.

[0029] In light of the above, it would be desirable to have improved continuously variable transmissions with fewer moving parts, an extended transmission speed ratio, and decreased weight and complexity.

[0030] The embodiments of the present invention as described herein will find many applications. For example, although reference is made to vehicular applications, the continuously variable transmission as described herein can be used in many applications such as bicycles, motorized vehicles and power tools, for example.

[0031] While Figures 1A-B depicts some embodiments, other embodiments are possible. While Figures 1A-B will be used to describe the operation of the invention in accordance with embodiments, a person of ordinary skill in the art will recognize many embodiments in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0032] The embodiments depicted in Figures 1A-B use a variator. The variator can be coaxial, or a non-coaxial variator. The variator may comprise one or more components of a commercially available coaxial variator tilting ball variator, for example one or more components of a variator commercially from the Fallbrook Technologies, Inc. Alternatively, variator may comprise one or more components of a commercially available non-coaxial variator, for example commercially available from Van Dorne.

[0033] This CVT comprises of a certain number of balls **997** (for example, 3-15 balls) to transfer torque through multiple fluid patches, depending on the application, two discs **995**, **996** or annular rings each having an engagement portion that engages the variator balls as input and output as shown on **FIG. 2A**. The balls are placed in a circular array around a central idler (sun) and contact separate input and output traction rings. The engagement portions may be in a conical or toroidal convex or concave surface contact with the variator balls, as input and output. The CVT may include an idler **999** contacting the balls as well as shown on **FIG. 2A**. The variator balls are mounted on axes **998**, themselves held in a cage or carrier allowing changing the ratio by tilting the variator balls' axes. This configuration allows the input and output to be concentric and compact. The result is the ability to sweep the transmission through the entire ratio range smoothly, while in motion, under load, or stopped.

[0034] Other types of ball CVTs also exist like the one produced by Milner but are slightly different. These alternative ball CVTs are additionally contemplated herein. As shown in Figure 2B, a variator is a system that uses a set of rotating and tilting balls in a carrier that is positioned between input and output rings. Tilting the balls changes their contact diameters and varies the speed ratio. As a result, the variator system offers continuous transition to any ratio within its range. The gear ratio is shifted by tilting the axes of the spheres in a continuous fashion, to provide different contact radii, which in turn drive the input and output rings, or discs. The multiple balls transfer torque through multiple fluid patches. The balls are placed in a circular array around a central idler (sun) and contact separate input and output traction rings. This

configuration allows the input and output to be concentric and compact. The result is the ability to sweep the transmission through the entire ratio range smoothly, while in motion, under load, or stopped.

[0035] A traction fluid is optionally located in the variator for lubrication and traction. When this fluid undergoes high contact pressures under rolling contact between the two rolling elements, the balls and the rings, the fluid undergoes a near-instantaneous phase transition to an elastic solid. Within this patch of traction the molecules of the fluid stack up and link to form a solid, through which shear force and thus torque can be transferred. Note that the rolling elements are actually not in physical contact when rotating.

[0036] Turning back to Figures 1A-B, the transmission is depicted with the input side on the right hand side and the output side on the left hand side of the page. At the right hand side, a power source, such as an engine or motor, would be provided for connection to the input shaft. The power source is not depicted and not necessary to an understanding of the present disclosure. A launching device would be connected between the power source and the transmission. The launching device might be such as a clutch, torque converter, or fluid coupling. The launching device is not depicted. The launching device would be connected to the input shaft, which is depicted on the right hand side of the transmission.

[0037] The depicted transmission may have two or more modes, a high mode and a low mode; the low mode is depicted in Figure 1A and the high mode is depicted in Figure 1B. In the low mode, power flows along a first path and through the variator in a first direction. In the high mode, power flows along a second path and through the variator in a second direction opposite the first direction. In many embodiments the rings of the variator are coaxial and concentrically arranged. Further, the input shaft, the output shaft, and the variator rings may comprise a coaxial arrangement although other arrangements are possible.

[0038] The low mode in **Figure 1A**, will be described first.

[0039] In the low mode **100**, the power flows along **Path 1**. The transmission comprises an input shaft **110** coupled to a power source (not shown). The input shaft **110** is coupled to a first clutch **120** (Clutch W) that can be coupled to an input shaft of the variator **130** when the clutch is engaged. The variator comprises an output shaft coupled to a third clutch **140** (Clutch X). The third clutch can be coupled to an output shaft of the transmission **150**.

[0040] In the low mode **100**, power from the launch device will be connected to Ring 1 (R1) **132** of the variator **130** by applying first Clutch (W), **120**. The variator Carrier (C) **135** is grounded and the output of the variator will be Ring 2 (R2) **133** in the low mode. The output of third clutch (X) **140** is connected to Ring (R2) **133** of the variator. The variator **130** can be connected

to a structure to vary the ratio of the variator. The variator **130** comprises a transmission speed ratio (hereinafter “SR”). The transmission speed ratio can be continuously varied and can be varied from about 0.5 to 2.0, for example, although many ranges can be achieved.

[0041] In the low mode, Ring 2 (R2) **133** will be connected to the output shaft **150** by applying third Clutch (X) **140** (located to the left of the variator in Figure 1A). The power will then be connected to Gear (S) **160**, which may be a tooth gear, such as a 30 tooth for example in some embodiments. Gear (S) **160** is located on the output shaft **150**. Gear (S) **160** is engaged with a Gear (T) **170**, which may be final drive gear, for example a 120 tooth final drive gear in some embodiments. Gear (T) **170** is connected to the differential and axle shafts (not shown).

[0042] On the left side of **Figures 1A and 1B**, the circles show the end view of the gears (G), (R), (S), and (T) and how the gears mesh. For example, the Gears (G), (S), and (R) are shown in both the cross sectional view and the end view on the left of Figure 1A. Gear (T) is in constant mesh with Gears (S) and (R) as shown in the end view. This low mode results in the power flowing in a first direction from right to left in the Figure 1A directly through the variator to the final drive Gears (S) and (T).

[0043] This kinematic arrangement shown in Figure 1A can be referred to as a “square” kinematic arrangement. The embodiments as described herein provide a squared kinematic arrangement for two or more modes, for example, and can provide an increased range transmission speed ratio with fewer moving parts. The term “square” comes from the two mode arrangement resulting in the transmission overall ratio being equal to the variator overall ratio squared, i.e. a 3:1 overall ratio variator with two modes results in a 9:1 overall ratio transmission. Adding additional modes will increase the overall transmission ratio range by the raising the variator ratio range to a power which is equal to the number of ranges. The general power relationship in accordance with embodiments is described by the following equation:

$$\text{Transmission overall ratio} = \text{Variator overall ratio}^{\text{Number of ranges}}$$

[0044] For example, a 3:1 overall ratio variator with three modes results in a 27:1 overall ratio transmission. A 4:1 overall ratio variator with two modes will result in a 16:1 ratio. A person of ordinary skill in the art can configure the transmission as described herein in many ways, for example with many combinations of variator ratios and numbers of ranges.

[0045] The square arrangement shown in Figure 1A reverses the direction of power from one mode to the next (i.e. the input element of the variator for one mode becomes the output element for the second mode). The square arrangement of Figure 1A provides a coaxial arrangement of the input disk **132** and the output disk **133**.

[0046] **Figure 1B** depicts the transmission **200** operating in the high mode. The power flows along **Path 2** and through the variator **230** in a direction opposite the low mode. In the high mode, first and second counter shafts **251**, **252** are coupled to the input shaft **210** and output shaft **250** respectively so that power flows in the second direction through the variator **230**. A first shaft is coupled to a first plurality of gears to operatively engage the second ring of the variator. A second shaft is coupled to a second plurality of gears to operatively engage the first ring of the variator. This operative engagement allows the power to flow along the second path opposite the first path.

[0047] In the high mode **200**, the power from the launch device (not shown) will be taken off the input shaft **210** by Gear (A) **211**, which may be such as a 30 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (A) **211** is located on the right side of the variator **230** in **Figure 1B**. Gear (A) transfers power to the lower counter shaft **251** which has Gear (B) **212**. Gear (B) may be a 60 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (A) **211** is shown engaged with Gear (B) **212**.

[0048] The engagement of Gear (A) and (B) results in the lower counter shaft **251** spinning backwards at a lower speed than the input shaft speed **210**, for the speed ratios and gear tooth counts described earlier, the counter shaft spins backward at half of the input shaft speed. Power is taken off the lower counter shaft **251** by Gear (C) **213**, which may be a 60 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (C) **213** is shown in driving connection with Gear (D) **214**. Gear (D) may comprise a 15 tooth gear in specific embodiments, for example.

[0049] The above-described arrangement results in the input to the fourth clutch (Y) **245** that is located to the left of the variator **230** in **Figure 1B** spinning forward at twice input speed. The fourth clutch (Y) **245** located to the left of the variator **230** in **Figure 1B** is applied, thus connecting Gear (D) **214** to Ring 2 (R2) **233**, which is now functioning as the input to the variator **230**.

[0050] The variator **230** will output the power to the right in Ring 1 (R1) **232**, which is connected to the clutch housing located to the right of the variator. Second clutch (Z) **225** will be applied thus connecting Ring 1 (R1) **232** to Gear (E) **216**, which may comprise a 45 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Power is then transferred from Gear (E) **216** to the Gear (F) **217**, which may comprise a 45 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (F) **217** is connected to the upper counter shaft **252**.

[0051] The driving connection between Gear (E) **216** and Gear (F) **217** results in the upper counter shaft **252** spinning backwards at the same speed as Ring 1 (R1) **232**. The power is then taken off the upper counter shaft **252** by Gear (G) **218**, which may comprise a 60 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (G) **218** is located on the left end of the upper counter shaft **252** in

Figure 1B. Gear (G) **218** is meshed with Gear (S) **260**, which may comprise a 30 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (S) **260** will now be spinning forward at twice the speed of Ring 1 (R1) **232** which is now functioning as the output of the variator **230**. Gear (T) **270**, the axle shaft rotation gear, is in constant mesh with Gear (S) **260** as shown in the end view.

[0052] The high mode **200** power flows through four additional gear meshes and the direction of power flow through the variator (left to right) is backwards relative to the low mode (right to left). In many embodiments, the transmission arrangement has the upper and lower counter shafts oriented parallel to each other and the input and outputs shafts of the transmission.

[0053] In many embodiments, the input shaft, the output shaft, and the variator are aligned along a common axis, and power flow **Path 1** can extend along the axis through the input shaft, the variator, and the output shaft in the first direction. Further, although **Path 1** is shown in the low mode, a person of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the gear ratios can be changed so that energy flows along **Path 1** in the high mode and along **Path 2** in the low mode, by changing the ratios of the gears on the shafts as described herein.

[0054] Although in specific embodiments as described herein gears with a particular gear tooth count are mentioned, the present disclosure is not limited to these mentioned gear tooth counts, and may be different, for example greater or less than the values provided.

[0055] The transmission also has a reverse mode **300** in many embodiments. The reverse mode **300** can be readily appreciated based on the following description with reference to **Figure 1C**. In the reverse mode, the power from the launch device will be taken off the input shaft **310** by Gear (A) **311** (a 30 tooth gear in specific embodiments) and transferred to the lower counter shaft **351** through Gear (B) **312** (a 60 tooth gear in specific embodiments), which is meshed with Gear A **311**. This results in the lower counter shaft **351** spinning backwards at half of the input shaft speed. Power is taken off the lower counter shaft **351** by applying the reverse clutch (Rev) **347** which directs power to Gear (R) **365**, which may comprise a 30 tooth gear in specific embodiments. Gear (R) **365** is in mesh with Gear (T) **370**, the axle shaft rotation gear, which may comprise a 120 tooth final drive gear in specific embodiments. The reverse ratio should generally be the same ratio as maximum underdrive but in the opposite direction. In many embodiments, power does not go through the variator in the reverse mode.

[0056] The gear arrangement shown in Figures 1A and 1B results in the axle shaft rotation [Gear (T)] being in the opposite direction as the input shaft when directing power through the variator. This reverse direction is helpful for a transverse mount front wheel drive vehicles that mount the transmission on the right side of the vehicle with conventional direction of engine rotation. For vehicles that utilize conventional engine rotation and place the transmission on the left side of the

engine it is helpful to have the axle shaft rotation in the same direction as the input shaft direction when directing power through the variator. A solution to providing the required direction reversal is to add an extra pair of external gears in series with the input or output, in specific embodiments. An alternative solution with fewer moving parts would be to attach the launch device output to the lower counter shaft rather than the input shaft with the required change in the gear tooth counts to return to the desired overall transmission speed ratio.

[0057] The reverse Gear (R) may have its tooth count adjusted in order to provide the desired overall reverse gear ratio with only Gears (R) and (T). In some embodiments, the other gear tooth counts remain the same and the variator functions at twice engine speed. In alternative embodiments, Gears (A) and (B) have identical tooth counts and Gears (C) and (D) have a tooth count ratio equal to the variator overdrive ratio in order to achieve a synchronous shift.

[0058] In many embodiments, the gear tooth counts have been selected so that the product of Gear (C) times Gear (A) divided by the product of Gear (B) times Gear (D) is equal to the variator overdrive ratio and the product of Gear (G) times Gear (E) divided by the product of Gear (S) times Gear (F) is also equal to the variator overdrive ratio. With these embodiments having the selected gear ratios, it is possible to make the low-high shift synchronous in that all of the internal components spin at the same speed before, during, and after the shift. This allows a high quality shift to be made by delivering the synchronous speed ratio in the variator (2.0:1 in this specific embodiment) and then fully applying both oncoming clutches prior to releasing either of the off going clutches. The gear tooth counts provided in this disclosure allow a synchronous shift (both low to high and high to low) when the variator provides a 2.0:1 overdrive ratio, although other ratios can be provided.

[0059] The above can be appreciated by **Figure 3** which depicts a graph of the transmission speed ratio (hereinafter “SR”) on the X axis and the variator speed ratio on the Y axis. The low mode is depicted as starting at a transmission speed ratio of 0.5:1 and increasing to 2.0:1 while the variator speed ratio increases from 0.5:1 to 2.0:1. At transmission and variator speed ratios of 2.0:1, the transmission speed ratio increases while the variator speed ratio decreases from 2.0:1 to 0.5:1.

[0060] Based on the present disclosure, a person of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that it is also possible to make a synchronous shift at the variator underdrive ratio where the product of Gear (C) times Gear (A) divided by the product of Gear (B) times Gear (D) is equal to the variator underdrive ratio and the product of Gear (G) times Gear (E) divided by the product of Gear (S) times Gear (F) is also equal to the variator underdrive ratio. This causes the low range

to use the power flow path (**Path 2**) shown in **Figure 1B** and the high range to use the power flow path (**Path 1**) shown in **Figure 1A**.

[0061] Further, the embodiments shown in Figures 1A and 1B can be configured with reverse rotation such as illustrated in the embodiment shown in Figure 1C, or alternative rotation configurations that will be readily apparent to a person of ordinary skill in the art based on the disclosure provide herewith.

[0062] Embodiments of the variable transmission described herein or that would be obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein, are contemplated for use in a variety of vehicle drivelines. For example, the variable transmissions disclosed herein may be used in bicycles, mopeds, scooters, motorcycles, automobiles, electric automobiles, trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUV's), lawn mowers, tractors, harvesters, agricultural machinery, all terrain vehicles (ATV's), jet skis, personal watercraft vehicles, airplanes, trains, helicopters, buses, forklifts, golf carts, motorships, steam powered ships, submarines, or space craft.

[0063] While the figures and description herein are directed to ball-type variators (CVTs), alternate embodiments are contemplated using another version of a variator (CVT), such as a Variable-diameter pulley (VDP) or Reeves drive, a toroidal or roller-based CVT (Extroid CVT), a Magnetic CVT or mCVT, Ratcheting CVT, Hydrostatic CVTs, Naudic Incremental CVT (iCVT), Cone CVTs, Radial roller CVT, Planetary CVT, or any other version CVT.

[0064] While preferred embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described herein, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that such embodiments are provided by way of example only. Numerous variations, changes, and substitutions will now occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. It should be understood that various alternatives to the embodiments of the invention described herein may be employed in practicing the invention. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the invention and that methods and structures within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A continuously variable transmission, comprising:
 - an input shaft;
 - an output shaft;
 - a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk, the first disk coaxial with the second disk;
 - one or more shafts and a plurality of gears configured to operatively engage the input shaft and the output shaft;
 - a first clutch connected to the input shaft to engage the first disk; and
 - a third clutch connected to the output shaft to engage the second disk;wherein in a first configuration the first clutch engages the first disk and the third clutch engages the second disk to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a first direction from the first disk to the second disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft;
 - wherein in a second configuration the one or more shafts, a fourth clutch and a second clutch, and the plurality of gears operatively engages the output shaft and the input shaft to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a second direction from the second disk to the first disk in order to connect the output shaft to the input shaft, the second direction opposite the first direction.
2. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 1, wherein the input shaft, the output shaft and the variator extend along a common axis, the first disk located along the axis toward the input shaft, the second disk located along the axis toward the output shaft and wherein the first configuration comprises a direct configuration such rotational energy is transmitted along the axis in the first direction from the input shaft to the output path.
3. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 2, wherein the one or more shafts comprises a first countershaft connected to a first plurality of gears and a second countershaft connected to a second plurality of gears and wherein rotational energy is transmitted from the input shaft to the second disk with the first countershaft connected to the first plurality of gears and wherein rotational energy is transmitted from the first disk to the output shaft with the second countershaft connected to the second plurality of gears.
4. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 3, wherein the first configuration comprises a low mode and the second configuration comprises a high mode.

5. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 3, wherein the first configuration comprises a high mode and the second configuration comprises a low mode.
6. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 3, wherein the variator comprises a speed ratio and wherein the one or more shafts and the plurality of gears are configured to provide a synchronous shift when the variator comprises a maximum speed ratio.
7. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 6, wherein the first configuration and the second configuration are configured to provide synchronous gear ratios when the variator provides the maximum speed ratio or a minimum speed ratio and wherein a third clutch is configured to operatively engage the first ring and a fourth clutch is configured to engage the second ring and wherein the third clutch is configured to operatively connect to a gear on a downstream end of the second shaft and the fourth clutch is configured to connected to a gear on an upstream end of the second shaft to transmit energy in the second direction from second ring to the first ring.
8. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 6, wherein gear tooth counts have been selected so that a product of a gear (Gear C) on a downstream end of the second shaft times a gear (Gear A) on the input shaft divided by a product of a gear (Gear B) on an upstream end of the second shaft times a gear (Gear D) operatively connected to a fourth clutch is equal to a variator overdrive ratio and a product of a gear (Gear G) on a downstream end of the first shaft times a gear (Gear E) operatively connected to a third clutch divided by the product of a gear (Gear S) on the output shaft times a gear (Gear F) on an upstream end of the first shaft is equal to the variator overdrive ratio in order to provide the synchronous shift.
9. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 6, wherein the transmission is configured to make a synchronous shift at an underdrive ratio and wherein a product of a gear (Gear C) on a downstream end of the second shaft times a gear (Gear A) on the input shaft divided by a product of a gear (Gear B) on an upstream end of the second shaft times a gear (Gear D) operatively connected to a third clutch is equal to a variator underdrive ratio and a product of a gear (Gear G) on a downstream end of the first shaft times a gear (Gear E) operatively connected to a third clutch divided by a product of a gear (Gear S) on the output shaft times a gear (Gear F) on an upstream end of the first shaft is equal to the variator underdrive ratio in order to provide the synchronous shift at the underdrive ratio.

10. A continuously variable transmission as in claim 1, wherein the variator comprises a plurality of rotatable balls configured to provide a continuously variable ratio of rotation of the input to the output disk in response to tilt angle of the plurality of rotatable balls.

11. A method comprising:

providing a continuously variable transmission comprising an input shaft, an output shaft, a variator comprising a first disk and a second disk, the first disk coaxial with the second disk, one or more shafts and a plurality of gears configured to operatively engage the input shaft and the output shaft, a first clutch connected to the input shaft to engage the first disk, and a second clutch connected to the output shaft to engage the second disk;

wherein in a first configuration the first clutch engages the first disk and the second clutch engages the second disk to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a first direction from the first disk to the second disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft;

wherein in a second configuration the one or more shafts and the plurality of gears operatively engages the input shaft and the output shaft to transmit rotational energy across the variator in a second direction from the second disk to the first disk in order to connect the input shaft to the output shaft, the first direction opposite the first direction.

12. The continuously variable transmission of any one of claims 1-10 further comprising a traction fluid in the variator for lubrication and traction.

13. A vehicle comprising the continuously variable transmission of any one of claims 1-10 and 12.

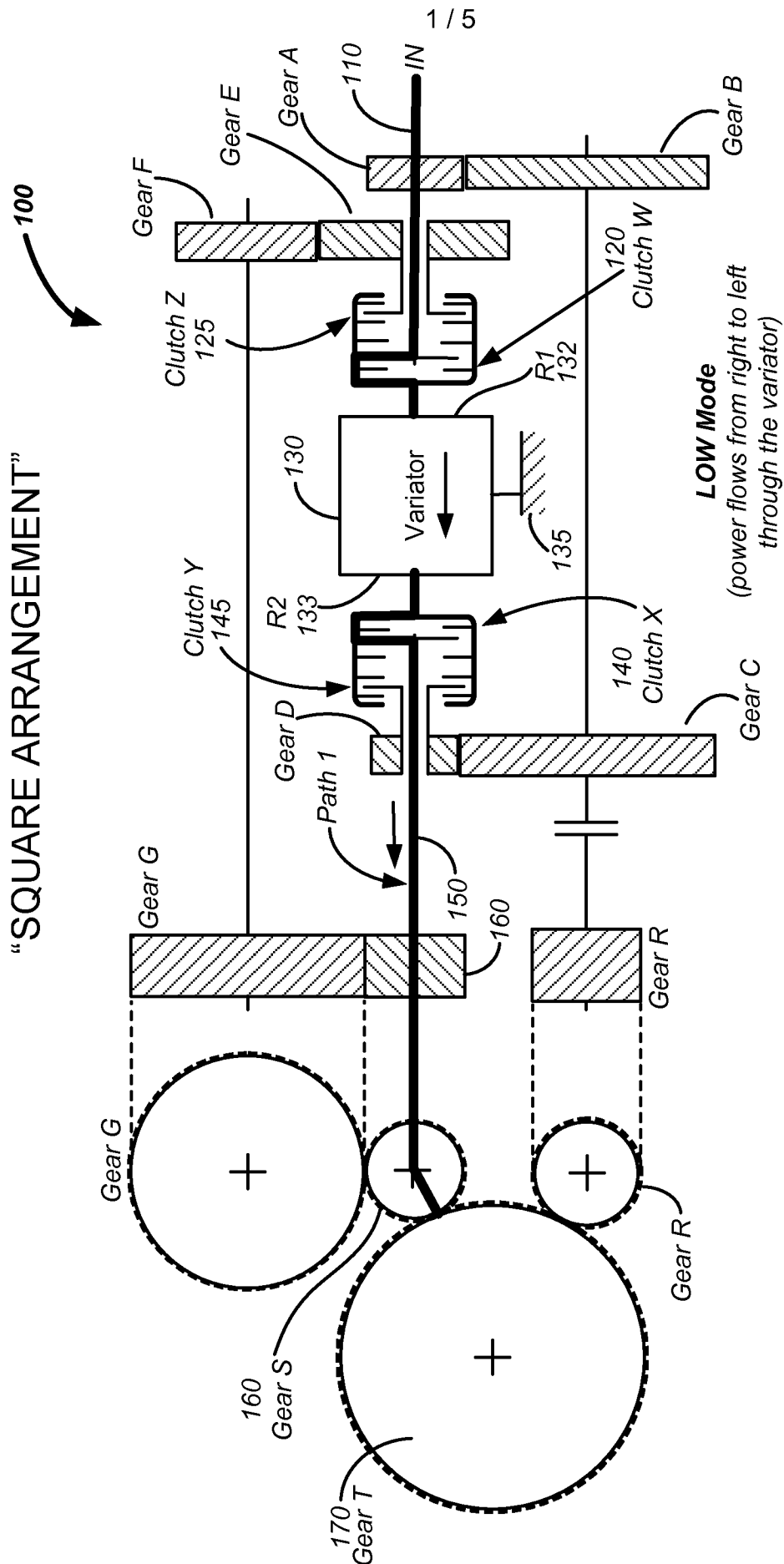


FIG. 1A

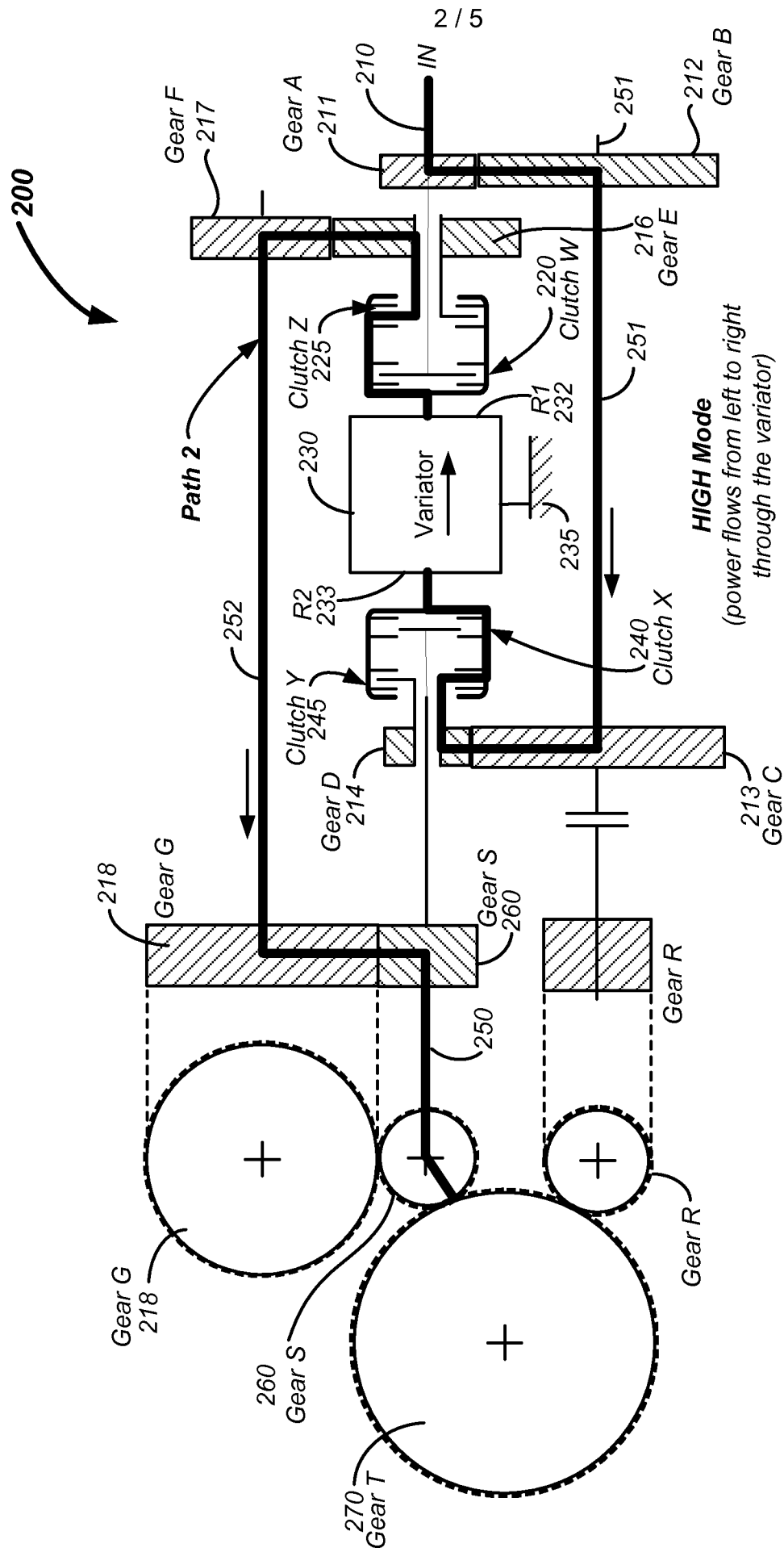


FIG. 1B

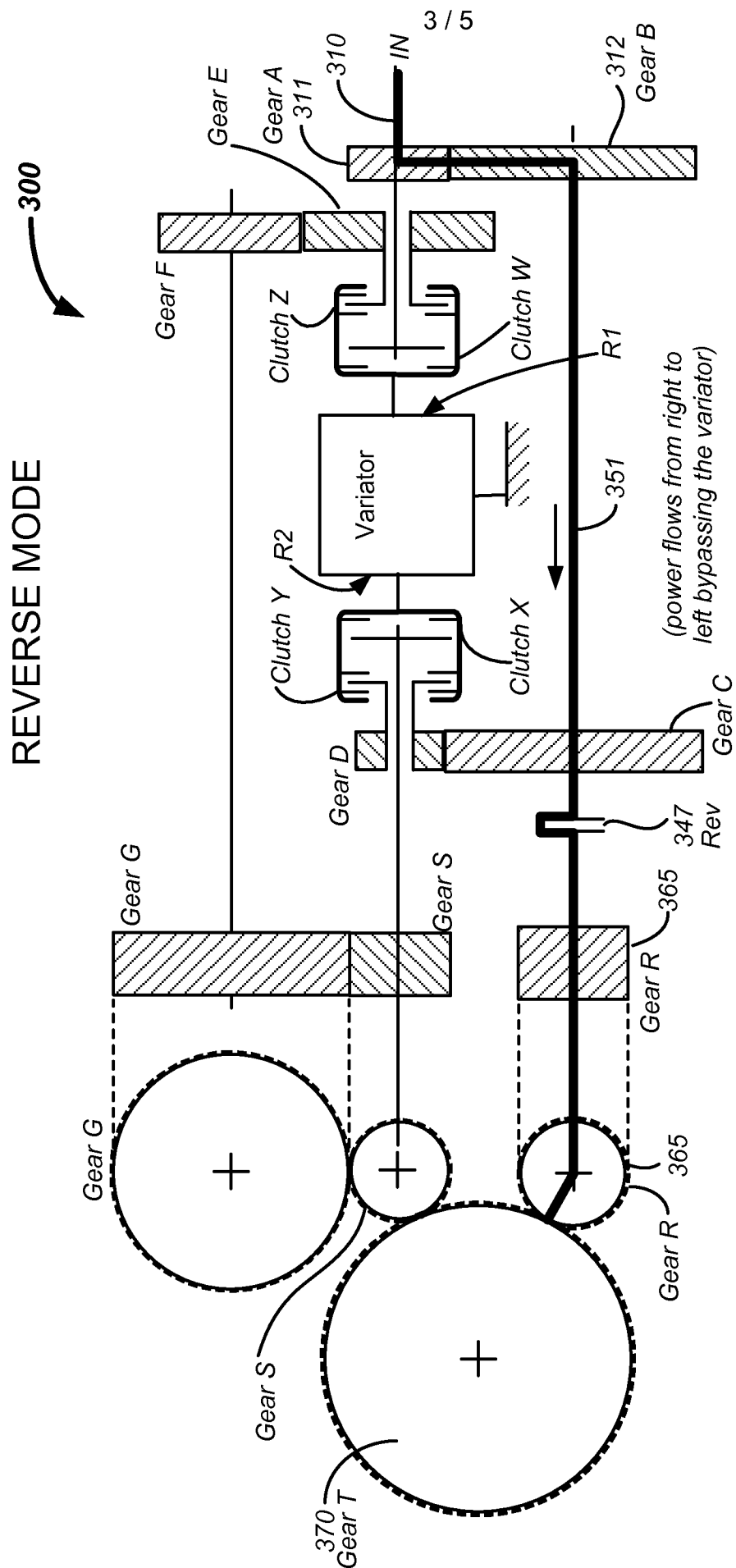
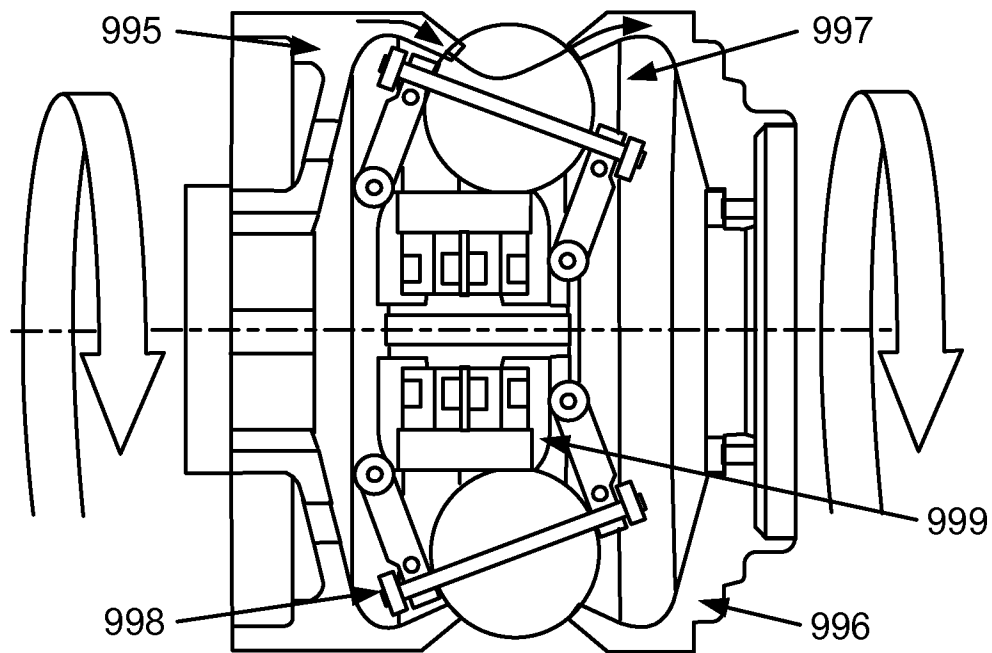
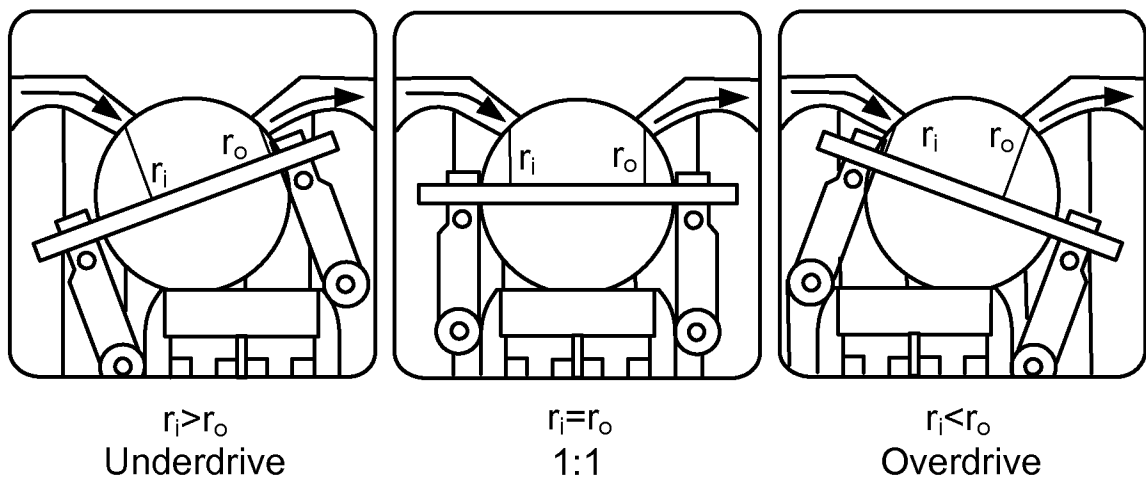


FIG. 1C

**FIG. 2A****FIG. 2B**

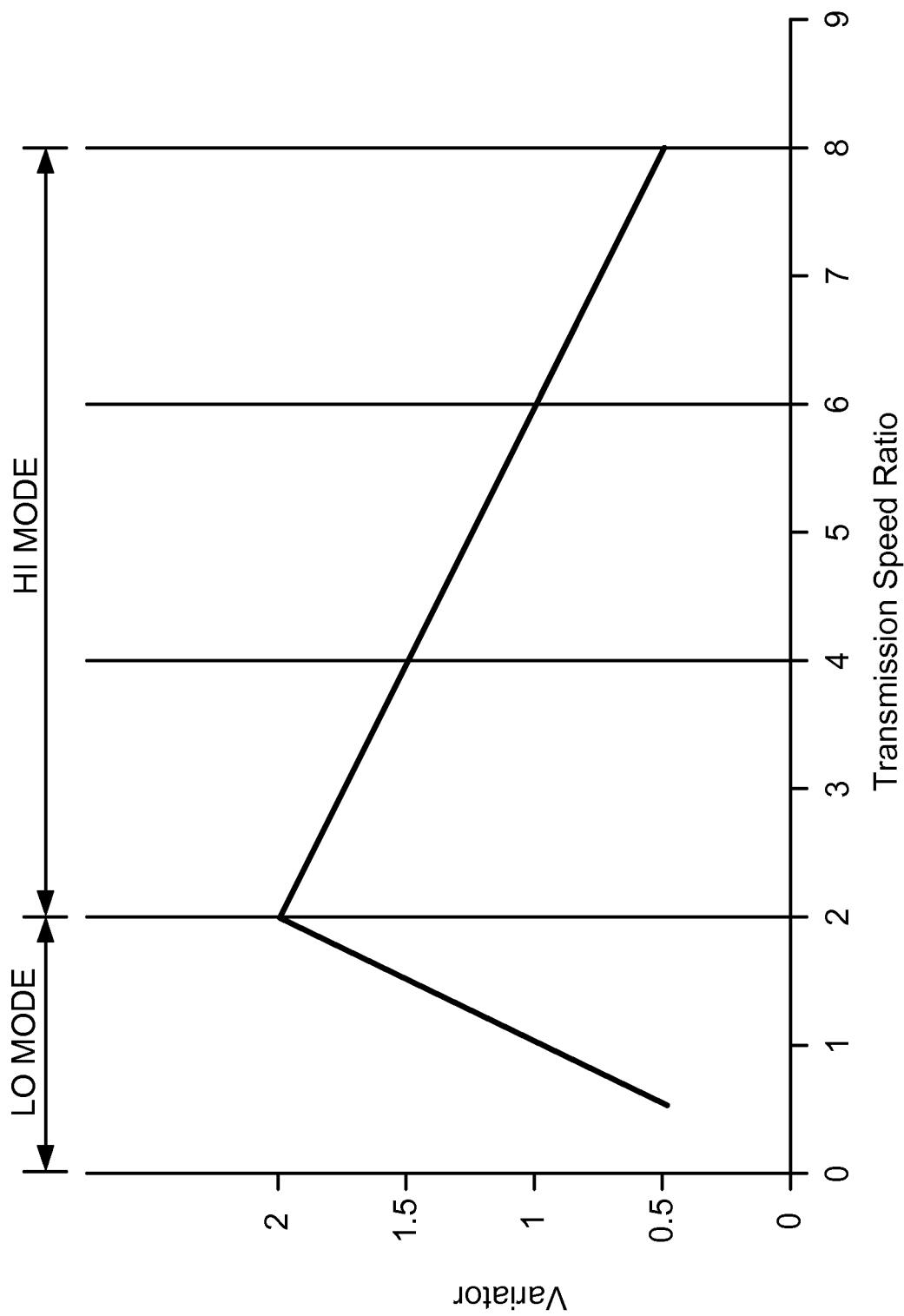


FIG. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US2013/070177

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - F16H 3/00 (2014.01)

USPC - 477/39

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)

IPC(8) - B60K 6/00, 6/20, 6/50, 6/54, 6/542; F16H 3/00, 3/02, 3/08, 15/00, 15/02, 15/04 (2014.01)

USPC - 477/31, 37, 39, 41; 903/917, 918

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

CPC - B60K 6/54, 6/543; B63H 2023/0258, 2023/0266; F16H 2037/00, 2037/02, 2037/021, 2037/06, 2037/08; Y10S 903/917, 903/918 (2013.01)

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatBase, Google Patents, Google, ProQuest Dialog, Engineering Village

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 6,155,951 A (KUHN et al) 05 December 2000 (05.12.2000) entire document	1-12
A	US 2002/0094911 A1 (HAKA) 18 July 2002 (18.07.2002) entire document	1-12
A	US 2012/0122624 A1 (HAWKINS, JR. et al) 17 May 2012 (17.05.2012) entire document	1-12
A	US 2009/0017959 A1 (TRILLER) 15 January 2009 (15.01.2009) entire document	1-12
A	US 2007/0042856 A1 (GREENWOOD) 22 February 2007 (22.02.2007) entire document	1-12

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* 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 application or patent 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

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

21 March 2014

Date of mailing of the international search report

14 APR 2014

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

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PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US2013/070177

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☒ Claims Nos.: 13
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.