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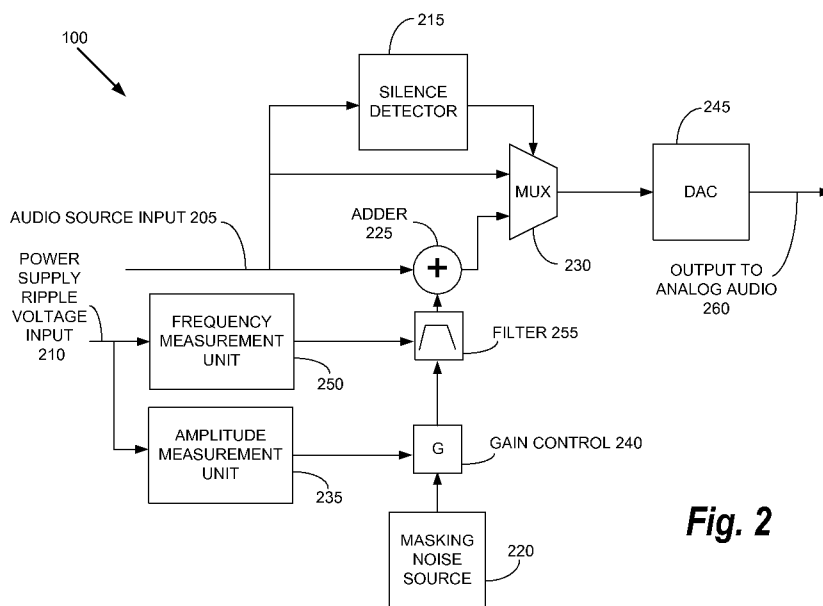
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(54) Title: VARIABLE NOISE MASKING DURING PERIODS OF SUBSTANTIAL SILENCE



(57) Abstract: Methods and systems for masking audio noise are disclosed. One apparatus includes a silence detector configured to detect a period of substantial silence in an audio signal; a masking noise source operably coupled to the silence detector, the masking noise source configured to generate a noise signal in response to the silence detector detecting the period of substantial silence; and at least one combining device operably coupled to the masking noise source, the at least one combining device configured to contribute to combining the audio signal and the noise signal. A method includes detecting a period of substantial silence in an audio signal; and combining masking noise with the audio signal during the period of substantial silence.

Fig. 2

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

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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)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 7 039 207 B1 (ELROD SUSAN VINZ [US] ET AL) 2 May 2006 (2006-05-02) column 1, line 60 - line 67 column 3, line 42 - column 4, line 59 column 5, line 50 - column 6, line 57 claims 1-18 figures 2,4,5-6	1,3-9
X	US 5 625 684 A (MATOUK ANTHONY F [US] ET AL) 29 April 1997 (1997-04-29) column 1, line 1 - line 23 column 1, line 54 - column 4, line 29 figures 3,4	1,2,5,8
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C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 01/73759 A1 (TELLABS OPERATIONS INC [US]; CHANDRAN RAVI [US]; DUNNE BRUCE E [US]; M) 4 October 2001 (2001-10-04) page 1, line 17 - page 2, line 4 page 33, line 11 - page 34, line 7 figure 3	1,5,8,10
A	WO 01/37254 A2 (NOKIA MOBILE PHONES LTD [FI]) 25 May 2001 (2001-05-25) the whole document	1-10

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No PCT/US2009/061752
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