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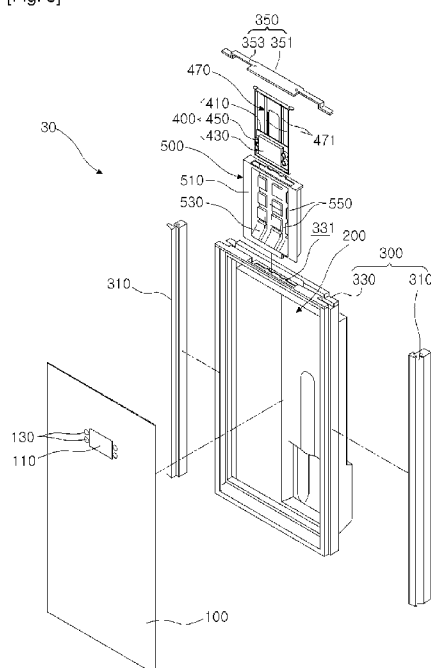
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(54) Title: REFRIGERATOR AND MANUFACTURING METHOD OF THE SAME

[Fig. 3]



(57) Abstract: The present embodiment provides a refrigerator. The refrigerator according to the present embodiment includes a panel member forming at least a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator, an inner case of which at least portion is spaced from the panel, a display case provided at one side of the panel member, insulating material filled in space between the panel member and the inner case, and a display unit mounted on the display case after the filling of the insulating material is completed.

Description

REFRIGERATOR AND MANUFACTURING METHOD OF THE SAME

Technical Field

- [1] The present embodiment relates to a refrigerator and a manufacturing method of the same.

Background Art

- [2] A refrigerator is an apparatus storing for foods at a low temperature. The refrigerator includes a main body in which a storage chamber is formed and a door coupled to the main body to open/close the storage chamber. And, a display unit displaying at least an operation state of the refrigerator is provided in the main body or the door.

Disclosure of Invention

Technical Problem

- [3] An object of the present embodiment is to provide a refrigerator that is easily mounted with a display unit, and has a simple structure and a low manufacturing cost.

Technical Solution

- [4] According to one aspect of the present embodiment, there is provided a refrigerator having a main body in which a storage chamber is formed and a door to open/close the storage chamber, the refrigerator comprising: a panel member forming at least a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator; an inner case of which at least portion is spaced from the panel; a display case provided at one side of the panel member; insulating material filled in space between the panel member and the inner case; and a display unit mounted on the display unit after the filling of the insulating material is completed.
- [5] According to another aspect of the present embodiment, there is provided a manufacturing method of a refrigerator comprising: filling insulating material between an inner case and a panel member forming a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator; and inserting a display unit into space between the insulating material and the panel member.
- [6] According to another aspect of the present embodiment, there is provided a manufacturing method of a refrigerator comprising: forming a mounting space for mounting a display unit and an insulation space for insulating between an inner case and a panel member forming a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator; filling the insulating material in the insulation space; mounting the display unit on the mounting space; and covering the display unit in a state where the display unit is mounted.

Advantageous Effects

- [7] With the proposed embodiment, the display unit is mounted on an inner side of the door or an inner side of the body so that the display unit is not exposed to the outside of the front panel, making it possible to improve an esthetic sense of the front panel.
- [8] Also, the display unit is inserted into the door or the body after the filling of insulating material is completed, making it possible to simplify assembly of the door or the body and to reduce a manufacturing cost.
- [9] The display unit can be slidably drawn-out from the door or the main body, making it possible to check and repair the display unit.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- [10] The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of preferred embodiments given in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:
- [11] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the exterior of a refrigerator according to a first embodiment;
- [12] FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view of a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment;
- [13] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view of a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment;
- [14] FIG. 4 is a partial perspective view showing a structure that a display unit according to a first embodiment is mounted to a refrigerator door;
- [15] FIG. 5 is a rear perspective view of a front plate constituting a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment;
- [16] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line A-A' of FIG. 2;
- [17] FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view taken along line B-B' of FIG. 2;
- [18] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a refrigerator according to a second embodiment;
- [19] FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing a structure that a display unit according to a second embodiment is inserted to a refrigerator main body.

Mode for the Invention

- [20] Hereinafter, an embodiment will be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.
- [21] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the exterior of a refrigerator according to a first embodiment, and FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view of a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment.
- [22] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, the refrigerator 1 according to the present embodiment includes a main body in which a storage chamber is formed, and at least one door 30 coupled movably to the main body 10 to open/close the storage chamber.

- [23] Although not shown, the main body 10 includes a panel member and an inner case, wherein a heat insulator such as expanded polystyrene (EPS) is foamly filled between the panel member and the inner case.
- [24] A display unit 400 displaying at least an operation state of the refrigerator 1 is provided on the door. And, the display unit 400 allows an operation condition of the refrigerator to be selected by means of a touch method by way of example.
- [25] A display window 110 allowing information displayed by the display unit 400 to be shown is formed on the front surface of the door corresponding to the position of the display unit through a front surface of the door 30. The display window 110 is formed to be transparent or translucent.
- [26] Manipulating parts 130 guiding a user's touch are displayed on both right and left sides based on the display window 110 of the door 30. The manipulating parts 130, which are formed in the portions corresponding to sensing units 450 (see FIG. 5) of the display unit 400, are printed or formed in a rugged shape on the front surface of the door 30 so that they can guide the positions of the sensing units 450.
- [27] And, sensors constituting the sensing units 450, which are capacitance sensors, sense microcurrent generated at the time of user's touch to generate input signals. Therefore, if a user touches the manipulating parts 130, the user's manipulation is sensed in the sensing units 450.
- [28] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view of a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment, FIG. 4 is a partial perspective view showing a structure that a display unit according to a first embodiment is mounted to a refrigerator door, and FIG. 5 is a rear perspective view of a front plate constituting a refrigerator door according to a first embodiment.
- [29] Referring to FIGS. 3 to 5, the door 30 includes a panel member 100 forming at least a portion of the exterior and an inner case 200 forming the shape of a rear surface. And, the panel member 100 is spaced from at least a portion of the inner case to form an insulation space and the insulation space is filled with insulating material 900.
- [30] The panel member 100 and the inner case 200 are coupled to each other by deco members 300, wherein the deco members 300 are coupled along edge boundaries of the panel member 100 and the inner case 200 to form a boundary surface of the door 30.
- [31] The panel member 100 is formed of tempered glass or plastic material, in an approximate rectangular plate shape, and a pattern is printed on the rear surface of the panel member 100.
- [32] The display window 110 is formed on the panel member 100 to be transparent or translucent. And, as described above, the manipulating parts 130 are formed on both right and left sides of the display window 110.

- [33] In the panel member 100, portions except the position of the display window 110 are colored and a separate printing job may be performed on the positions of the manipulating parts 130.
- [34] The inner case 200 is formed in a shape corresponding to the opening portion of a storage chamber formed in the main body 10. And, although not shown, gasket is provided to an edge of the door rider so that the storage chamber can keep airtight.
- [35] The deco member 300 includes a plurality of side decoes forming right and left sides of the door 30, and a plurality of cab decoes 330 forming up and down surfaces of the door 30.
- [36] Among the plurality of cab decoes 330, an inserting part 331 is formed on an upper side deco. The inserting part 331 provides a path for inserting the display unit 400.
- [37] A display case 500 guiding the insertion of the display unit 400 and supporting the display unit 400 is coupled to the upper side deco. And, the display unit 400 is slidably mounted to the display case 500, penetrating through the inserting part 331 of the upper side deco.
- [38] The display case 500 is formed so that its front surface and upper surface are opened.
- [39] The display case 500 is coupled to the cab deco 330 (upper side deco) by a coupling member such as a screw.
- [40] And, the upper side deco is coupled to the panel member 100 and the inner case 200 in a state where the display case 500 is coupled to the upper side deco. Then, the display case 500 is positioned between the panel member 100 and the inner case 200, in a state where the display case 500 is coupled to the upper deco.
- [41] The front surface of the display case 500 is closely adhered to the rear surface of the panel member 100.
- [42] A bending part 510 is formed on the boundary of the opened front surface of the display case 500. The bending part 510 allows the opened front surface of the display case 500 to be closely adhered to the rear surface of the panel member 100. As the bending part 510 is closely adhered to the panel member 100, a separated space (display unit mounting space) isolated from the insulation space where the insulating material 900 is foamed may be formed on an inner side of the door 30.
- [43] A plurality of pressure parts 530 are formed on the inner side surface of the display case 500. The pressure parts 530 are projected forward from the inner side surface of the display case 500. The pressure parts 530 are closely adhered to the display unit 400 in a state where the display unit 400 is mounted to the display case 500 to pressurize the display unit 400 towards the panel member 100. As the pressure parts pressurize the rear surface of the display unit, the front surface of the display unit 400 can be closely adhered to the rear surface of the panel member 100 so that a back and forth movement of the display unit is prevented.

- [44] Guide rails 550 are formed on the inner surface of the display case 500. The guide rails 550 are formed by embedding a portion of the display case 500 backward and are extended upward and downward.
- [45] A plurality of guide rails 550 may be provided for a more stable sliding of the display unit 400, wherein the plurality of guide rails 550 are spaced right and left at a predetermined interval.
- [46] Meanwhile, a plurality of mounting guides 570 are provided on the rear surface of the panel member 100. The plurality of mounting guides 570 may, for example, be formed of plastic material to be coupled to the rear surface of the panel member, wherein the plurality of mounting guides 570 are spaced right and left.
- [47] The mounting guides 570 are coupled to the display unit 400 to guide the right and left positions to which the display unit 400 is inserted. And, the right and left movement of the display unit 400 can be prevented in a state where the display unit 400 is coupled to the mounting guide 570.
- [48] Of course, the mounting guides 570 may also be formed on the display case 500 rather than on the rear surface of the panel member 100.
- [49] Meanwhile, the display unit 400 includes a PCB board 410, a display part 430, a sensing part 450, and a unit guide 470. The PCB board 410 electrically connects the sensing part 450 to the display part 430 and controls each driving thereof.
- [50] The display part 430 is positioned in a central portion of the PCB board 410 and displays at least an operation state to the external. The display part 430 may, for example, be a LCD.
- [51] The sensing part 450 receives operating signals by a user's touch as described above.
- [52] The display part 430 and the sensing part 450 are mounted on the PCB board 410, and the PCB board 410 is mounted on the unit guide 470. And, the unit guide 470 is slidably mounted on the display case 500.
- [53] Guide parts 471 projected backward are formed on the rear surface of the unit guide 470. And, the guide parts 471 are formed to be vertically long and are inserted into the inner sides of the guide rails 550.
- [54] Guide ribs 473 are formed on both right and left stages of the unit guide 470. The guide ribs 473 are coupled to the mounting guide 570.
- [55] A cover member 350 is coupled to the upper side deco. The cover member 350 selectively covers the inserting part 331. The cover member 350 includes a shielding part 351 shielding the inserting part 331 and a mount part 353 extended to both sides of the shielding part 351 to be coupled to the upper side deco.
- [56] In the present embodiment, the display unit 400 is described to be inserted into the inside of the door by penetrating through the upper side deco. However, the display unit 400 may also be inserted into the door by penetrating through a lower side deco or

through the side deco 310.

[57] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line A-A of FIG. 2, and FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view taken along line B-B' of FIG. 2.

[58] Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, an assembling method of the door will be described.

[59] First, in order to assemble the door 30, the panel member 100 and the door rider 200 are prepared. And, the panel member 100 and the inner case 200 are coupled to the side deco 310.

[60] And, the panel member 100 and the inner case 200 are coupled to the lower side deco. And, after coupling the display case 500 to the upper side deco, the panel member 100 and the inner case 200 are coupled to the upper side deco 130. Then, an insulation space for filling insulating material 900 and a mounting space for mounting the display unit 400 are partitionally provided on the inner side of the door 30.

[61] After the respective decoes 310 and 330 are coupled to the panel member 100 and the inner case 200, the insulating material 900 is foamly filled excepting for the space for mounting the display unit 400.

[62] After the foam filling of the insulating material 900 on the inner side of the door 30 is completed, the display unit 400 is inserted into the inserting part 331 of the upper side deco. Then, the display unit 400 is coupled to the respective mounting guides 570 to be slidably mounted to the display case 500.

[63] After the display unit 400 is mounted on the display case 500, the cover member 350 is coupled to the upper side deco, thereby completing the assembling of the door.

[64] Meanwhile, when the display unit 400 is checked or is trouble, the display unit 400 can be drawn out by the isolating cover member 350 from the upper side deco and then allowing the unit guides 470 to be slid upward. And, after the work is completed, the unit guide can be inserted again into its original position.

[65] With the present embodiment, the display unit is mounted on the inner side of the door so that the display unit is not exposed to the outer side of the front panel, having an advantage that an esthetic sense of the front panel is improved.

[66] Also, the display unit is inserted to the door after the filling of the insulating material is completed, having advantages that the assembling of the door is simplified and a manufacturing cost is reduced.

[67] Also, the display unit can be slidably drawn out from the door, having an advantage that the display unit can be checked and repaired.

[68] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a refrigerator according to a second embodiment, and FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing a structure that a display unit according to a second embodiment is inserted to a refrigerator main body.

[69] The present embodiment is the same as the first embodiment, excepting for the position on which the display unit is mounted. Therefore, only the characteristic

portion of the present embodiment will be described hereinafter.

[70] Referring to FIGS. 8 and 9, the refrigerator 2 according to the present embodiment includes a main body 20 in which a storage chamber is formed, and a door 4 coupled to an upper side of the main body 20 to open/close the storage chamber.

[71] The main body 20 includes a panel member 600 forming at least a portion of the exterior and an inner case 620. Insulating material is foamly filled between the panel member 600 and the inner case 620.

[72] The panel member 600 may, for example, be formed of tempered glass or plastic material, and the position of the panel member may be fixed by a side deco 610.

[73] And, a cab deco 670 is coupled to an upper side of the panel member 600. An inserting part 672 for inserting a display unit 700 is inserted is formed on the cab deco. And, a display case 700 for mounting the display unit 700 is coupled to the cab deco 670. Also, a cover member 674 for covering the inserting part is coupled to the cab deco. And, the display unit is slidably mounted to the display case after the insulating material between the panel member and the inner case is foamly filled.

[74] The shape and coupling method of the display case are the same as those of the first embodiment so that the detailed description thereof will be omitted. Also, the mounting method of the display is the same as that of the first embodiment so that the detailed description thereof will be omitted.

[75] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conceptions and specific embodiments disclosed in the foregoing description may be readily utilized as a basis for modifying or designing other embodiments for carrying out the same purposes of the present invention. Those skilled in the art will also appreciate that such equivalent embodiments do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

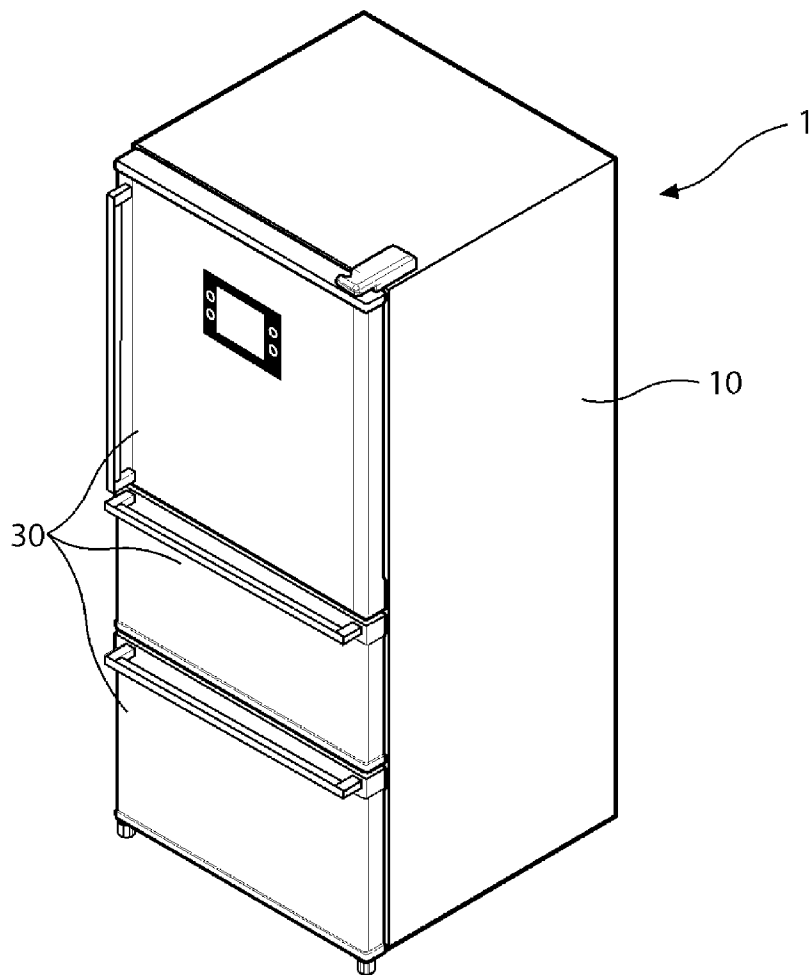
[76]

Claims

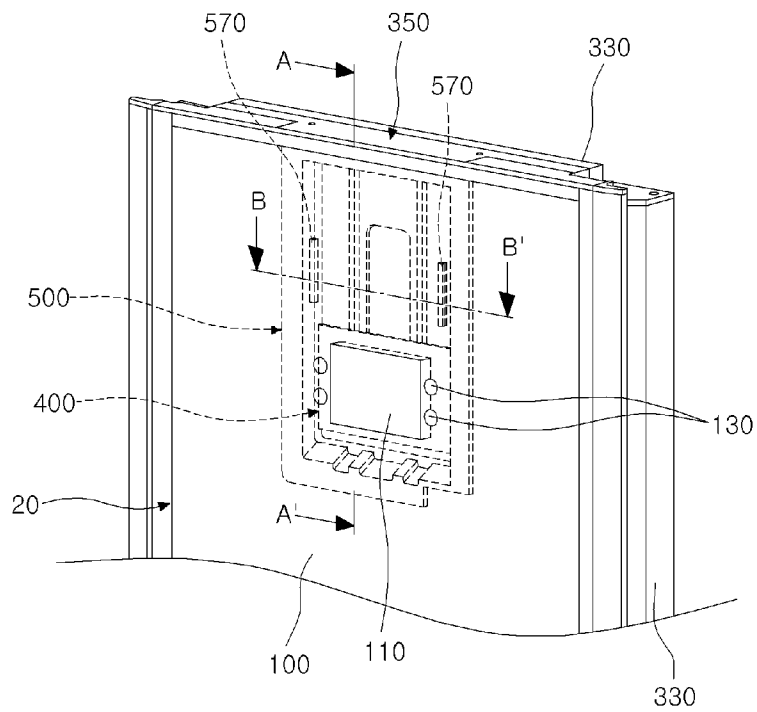
- [1] A refrigerator having a main body in which a storage chamber is formed and a door to open/close the storage chamber, the refrigerator comprising:
a panel member forming at least a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator;
an inner case of which at least portion is spaced from the panel;
a display case provided at one side of the panel member;
insulating material filled in space between the panel member and the inner case;
and
a display unit mounted on the display unit after the filling of the insulating material is completed.
- [2] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the display unit is inserted into space between the display case and the panel member.
- [3] The refrigerator according to claim 1, further comprising a deco member coupling the panel member to the inner case, wherein an inserting part through which the display unit penetrates is formed on the deco member.
- [4] The refrigerator according to claim 3, further comprising a cover member coupled to the deco member to cover the inserting part.
- [5] The refrigerator according to claim 3, wherein the display case is coupled to the deco member.
- [6] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the display case is closely adhered to the panel member in a state where the display case is mounted on the display case.
- [7] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the panel member includes mounting guides coupled to the display unit, and the display unit includes guide ribs coupled to the mounting guides.
- [8] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the display unit is slidably mounted on the display case, the display unit includes guide parts guiding the mounting of the display unit, and the display case includes guide rails guiding the sliding of the guide parts.
- [9] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the display case includes a pressure part pressurizing the display unit toward the panel member.
- [10] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the display unit includes a sensing part sensing a touch operation of the panel member and a display part displaying at least an operation state of the refrigerator.
- [11] The refrigerator according to claim 10, wherein the panel member includes an manipulating part guiding the position of the sensing part, and a display window formed in the position corresponding to the display part.

- [12] The refrigerator according to claim 1, wherein the panel member forms at least a portion of the exterior of the main body or the door.
- [13] A manufacturing method of a refrigerator comprising:
filling insulating material between a panel member forming a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator and an inner case; and
inserting a display unit into space between the insulating material and the panel member.
- [14] The manufacturing method according to claim 13, wherein the panel member is coupled to the inner case by a deco member, and the panel member is inserted by penetrating through the deco member.
- [15] The manufacturing method according to claim 14, further comprising coupling a cover member covering the display unit to the deco member.
- [16] A manufacturing method of a refrigerator comprising:
forming a mounting space for mounting a display unit and an insulation space for insulating between an inner case and a panel member forming a portion of the exterior of the refrigerator;
filling the insulating material in the insulation space;
mounting the display unit on the mounting space; and
covering the display unit in a state where the display unit is mounted.
- [17] The manufacturing method of the refrigerator according to claim 16, wherein the panel member is coupled to the inner case by a deco member, and an inserting part through which the display is penetrated is formed on the deco member.
- [18] The manufacturing method of the refrigerator according to claim 16, wherein the mounting space and the insulation space are partitioned by a display case, and the display unit is mounted on the display case.
- [19] The manufacturing method of the refrigerator according to claim 18, wherein the display unit is closely adhered to the panel member in a state where the display unit is mounted on the display case.
- [20] The manufacturing method of the refrigerator according to claim 18, wherein the display unit receives operating signals through a touch of the panel member.

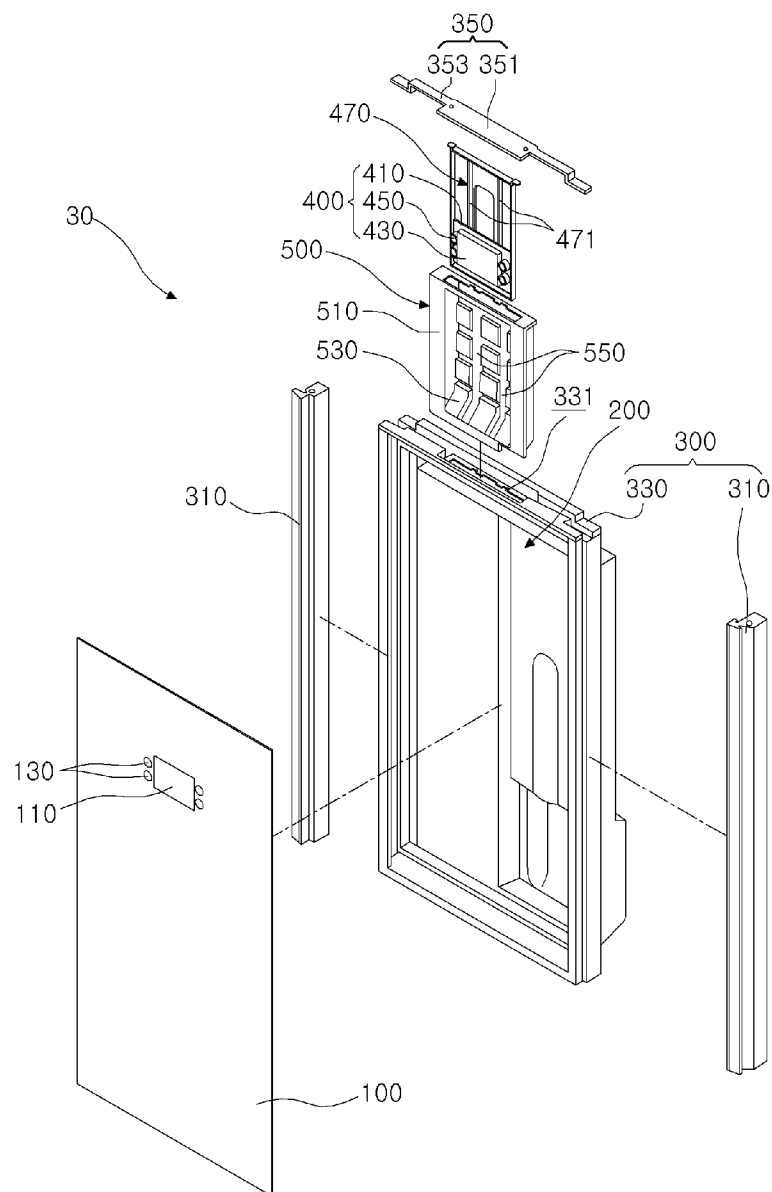
[Fig. 1]



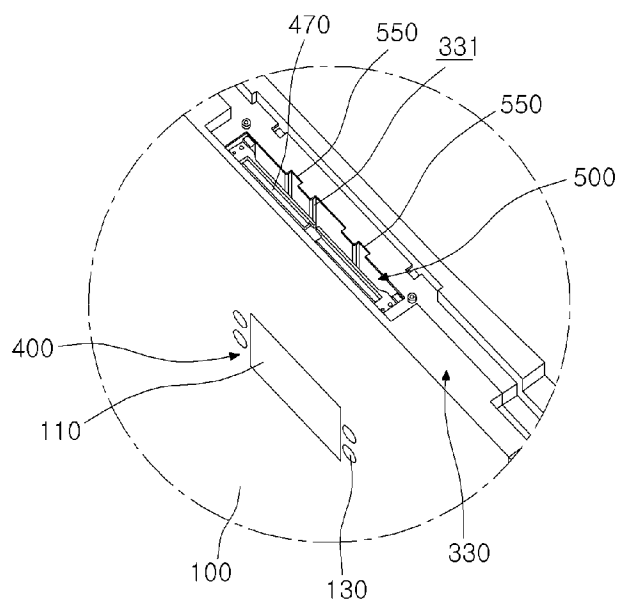
[Fig. 2]



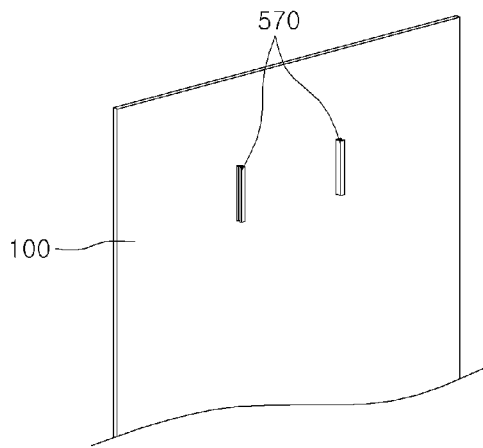
[Fig. 3]



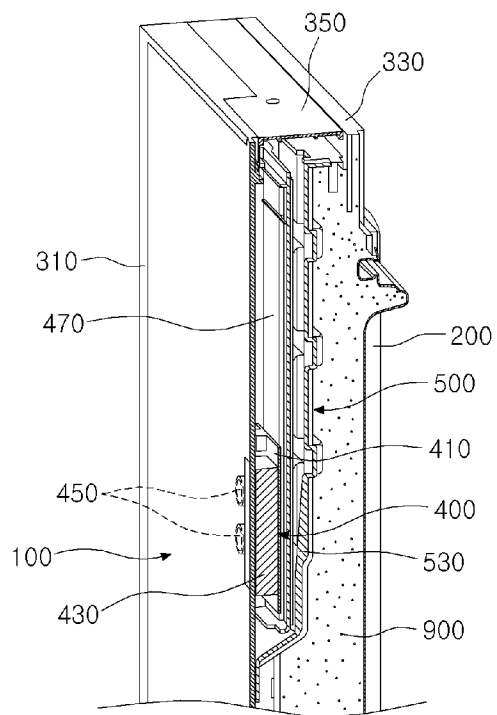
[Fig. 4]



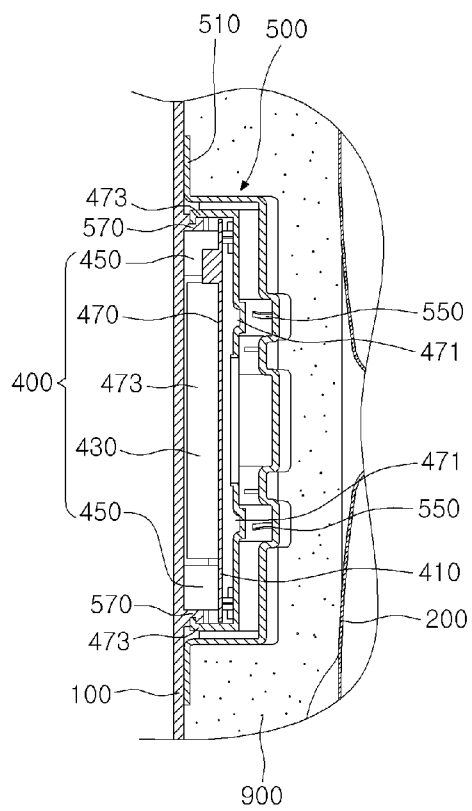
[Fig. 5]



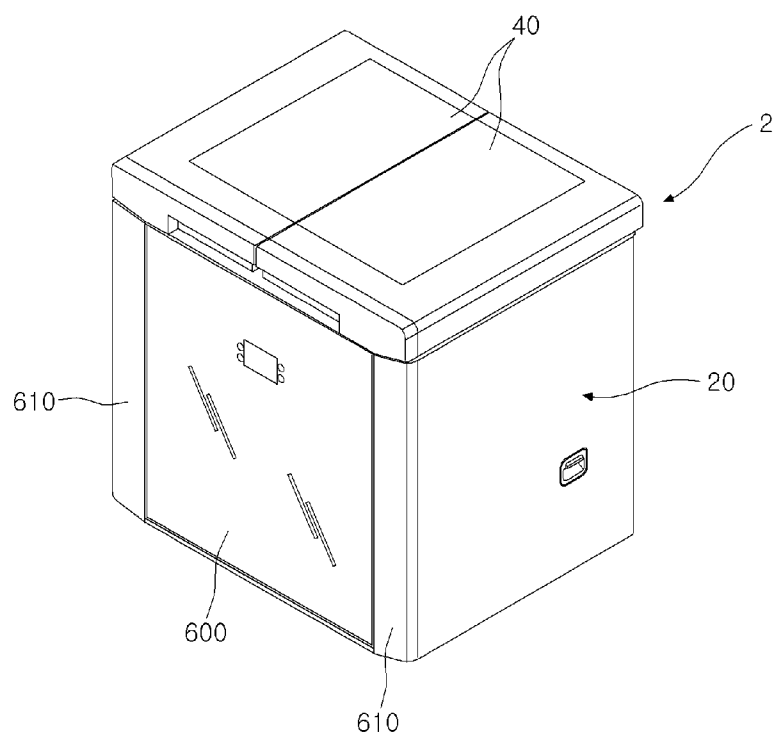
[Fig. 6]



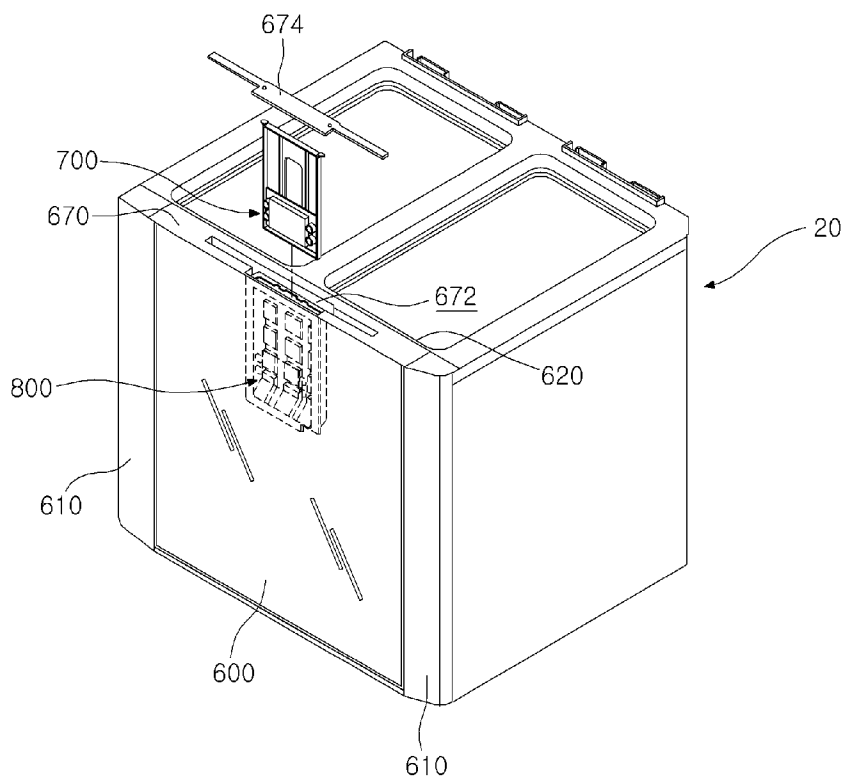
[Fig. 7]



[Fig. 8]



[Fig. 9]



A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER***F25D 23/00(2006.01)i***

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: F25D 23/00, 23/02

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

Korean Utility models and applications for Utility models since 1975

Japanese Utility models and applications for Utility models since 1975

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

KIPASS (KIPO internal): "Keyword: refrigerator, door, panel member, display unit, insulating material, and similar terms"

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	KR 10-2007-0034835 A (LG ELECTRONICS INC.) 29 March 2007 See abstract; claim 1; figures 3 and 4.	1, 2, 6, 10-16, 18-20 3-5, 7-9, 17
A	KR 10-0582082 B1 (LG ELECTRONICS INC.) 22 May 2006 See abstract; claim 1; figure 2.	1-20
A	KR 20-2001-0001242 U (SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO., LTD.) 15 January 2001 See abstract; claim 1; figures 1 and 2.	1-20

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"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

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

21 APRIL 2009 (21.04.2009)

Date of mailing of the international search report

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Name and mailing address of the ISA/KR

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KONG, Ho Jin

Telephone No. 82-42-481-8310



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/KR2008/007498

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
KR 10-2007-0034835 A	29.03.2007	AU 2006-270614 A1 EP 1907774 A1 JP 2009-501311 US 2008-0231159 A1	25.01.2007 09.04.2008 15.01.2009 25.09.2008
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