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54 Titre : Drive system and vehicle.

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Abrégé :

Provided are a drive system, etc. that can perform adjustments in accordance with demand for increases in torque while suppressing reductions in fuel efficiency. The drive system is provided with: an engine that has an engine output adjustment unit; a generator that has a supplied electric current adjustment unit that changes the magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit that passes through a stator core, and thereby changes the inductance of a winding and adjusts the electric current that is outputted from the generator; a motor that is directly or indirectly as well as removably connected to a rotational drive mechanism and that is configured so as to be driven by electric power that is outputted from the generator and to output rotational power to the rotational drive mechanism; and a control unit that is configured so as to control, in accordance with torque demand on the drive system for torque that is outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism, both the engine output adjustment unit and the supplied electric current adjustment unit that adjusts electric current by changing the inductance of the winding.

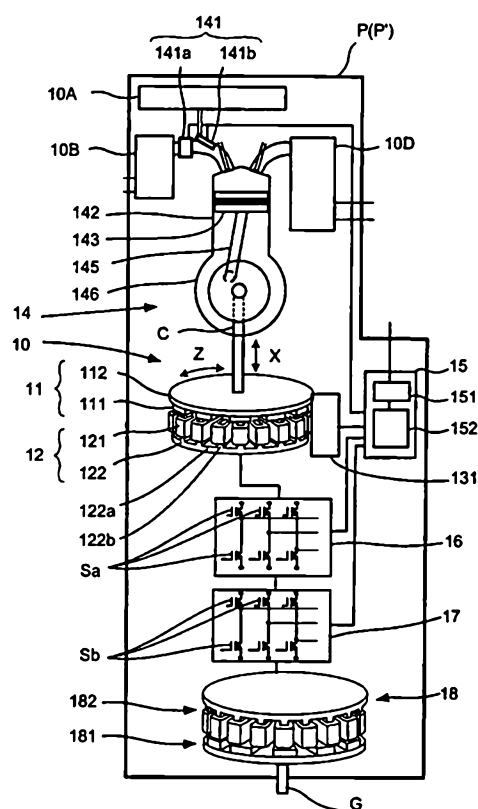


Fig. 2

YAMAHA HATSUDOKI KABUSHIKI KAISHA

DESCRIPTION

Title of Invention

DRIVE SYSTEM AND VEHICLE

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Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to a drive system and a vehicle.

Background Art

10 [0002] For example, Patent Literature 1 (PTL1) shows a vehicle.

The vehicle shown in Patent Literature 1 is a hybrid vehicle. This vehicle includes an engine, an accelerator pedal, a first rotary electric machine, a second rotary electric machine, and a drive wheel. The first rotary electric machine is coupled to an output shaft of the engine. The first rotary electric machine functions mainly as a generator. The second rotary electric machine is electrically connected to the first rotary electric machine. The second rotary electric machine functions mainly as a motor. By a current flowing in the first rotary electric machine and the second rotary electric machine, power running is performed. The second rotary electric machine is coupled to the drive wheel of the vehicle. The second rotary electric machine generates a vehicle driving force.

[0003] In the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1, a depression of the accelerator pedal depressed by a driver represents a request for acceleration of the vehicle. The vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1 is, if provided with an electronic-controlled throttle device, able to optionally adjust the amount of air taken in by the engine. The vehicle is, therefore, controlled in the following manner, for example. A target output of the second rotary electric machine (motor) is determined based on the vehicle speed and the amount of depression of the accelerator pedal depressed by the driver. A target electric power to be generated by the first rotary electric machine (generator) is determined in accordance with the target output of the second rotary electric machine. A target output of the engine is determined in accordance with the target electric power to be generated. The amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine are controlled so as to achieve the target output. In this control, the first rotary electric machine is controlled in its generation of electric power and the second rotary electric machine is controlled in its output. In a

case where the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1 is configured with its accelerator pedal mechanically coupled with its engine throttle, the electric power generated by the first rotary electric machine and the output of the second rotary electric machine are controlled in accordance with an actual
5 output of the engine. In Patent Literature 1, as described above, electric power (output) of the rotary electric machine is controlled so as to allow applications to various types of vehicles with different characteristics.

Citation List

10 Patent Literature

[0004] PTL1: Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2002-345109

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

15 [0005] The vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1 controls the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine, in order to control rotational power of the drive wheel. The vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1 increases the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine, in order to increase the torque of the drive wheel. A
20 situation requiring an increase of the torque of the drive wheel occurs in accelerating the vehicle, for example. As the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine increase, the rotation speed of the engine increases. That is, rotational power outputted from the engine increases. As a result, a current outputted from the first rotary electric machine that
25 functions as a generator increases, so that a current supplied to the second rotary electric machine increases. The increase of the current supplied to the second rotary electric machine causes an increase of the torque of the drive wheel. Here, there has been a problem where the current outputted from the generator is less readily increased than the rotation speed of the generator is.

30 [0006] In the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1, therefore, an attempt to increase a power generation current for the purpose of increasing the torque outputted from the second rotary electric machine to the drive wheel requires an excessive increase of the output power of the engine. This may decrease the fuel efficiency. Dealing with the voltage, which increases in response to
35 the increase of the output power of the engine, may also decrease the fuel efficiency.

[0007] An object of the present invention is to provide a drive system, a control device, and a vehicle that are able to make adjustment responsive to a requirement of increasing a torque with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

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Solution to Problem

[0008] To solve the problems described above, the present invention adopts the following configurations.

[0009] (1) A drive system mountable to a vehicle including a rotational drive mechanism, the drive system configured to drive the rotational drive mechanism,

the drive system comprising:

an engine that outputs rotational power, the engine including an engine output adjustment unit that adjusts the rotational power;

15 a generator that receives rotational power from the engine and outputs electric power according to the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the generator including a rotor, a stator, and a supply current adjustment unit, the rotor including a permanent magnet, the rotor rotated by the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the stator arranged opposite
20 to the rotor, the stator including a winding and a stator core with the winding wound thereon, the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust a current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing an inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through
25 the stator core;

a motor connected directly or indirectly to the rotational drive mechanism, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable, the motor driven by the electric power outputted from the generator, to output rotational power to the rotational drive mechanism; and

30 a control device that controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust the current by changing the inductance of the winding, in accordance with a torque requirement of the drive system, the torque requirement requesting a torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism.

35 [0010] In the drive system of (1), the engine output adjustment unit adjusts rotational power to be outputted from the engine. The rotor of the generator

connected to the engine receives the rotational power and rotates. At this time, a magnetic flux of the permanent magnet included in the rotor acts on the winding. This generates an induced voltage. The induced voltage causes electric power to be outputted. The generator outputs electric power according to the rotational power of the engine. The supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted from the generator by changing the inductance of the winding of the generator. A rotational torque to be outputted from the motor to the rotational drive mechanism is changed accordingly.

In the generator, the ratio of a current change to a voltage change obtained when changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is different from that obtained when changing the output of the engine.

In the drive system of (1), the control device controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit in accordance with the torque requirement. Thus, the drive system of (1) is able to increase the torque to be outputted to the rotational drive mechanism, with suppression of an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine and an excessive increase of the voltage. In addition, since the control device controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit, adjustment of the rotational power of the engine and adjustment of the inductance of the winding are controlled in an integrated manner. Therefore, the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit are able to make adjustment for increasing the torque to be outputted to the rotational drive mechanism, with suppression of an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine and an excessive increase of the voltage. Thus, a loss that may be caused by an excessive increase of the rotational power and an excessive increase of the voltage can be suppressed. Accordingly, the drive system of (1) is able to make adjustment responsive to a requirement of increasing the torque with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0011] (2) The drive system of (1), wherein

the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, includes at least one non-magnetic gap, and

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be supplied to the motor, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a

non-magnetic gap being among the at least one non-magnetic gap, the non-magnetic gap existing between the winding and the rotor.

[0012] In the configuration of (2), the supply current adjustment unit changes the inductance of the winding by changing the magnetic resistance of the non-magnetic gap existing between the winding and the rotor. The permanent magnet moving along with rotation of the rotor causes an alternating magnetic field to occur between the winding and the rotor. For example, reducing the magnetic resistance of the non-magnetic gap existing between the winding and the rotor leads to a reduction of an alternating magnetic field loss. This can increase the current relative to the rotational power supplied to the rotor. Accordingly, the current to be supplied to the motor can be adjusted to an increased degree.

[0013] (3) The drive system of (1) or (2), wherein
the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, includes at least one non-magnetic gap, and
the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be supplied to the motor, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a non-magnetic gap being among the at least one non-magnetic gap, the non-magnetic gap whose magnetic resistance being highest when the inductance of the winding is set to the highest settable value.

[0014] The configuration of (3) changes the magnetic resistance of the non-magnetic gap whose magnetic resistance is highest when the inductance of the winding is set to the highest settable value. This makes it easy to increase the amount of change of the inductance of the winding. Accordingly, the current can be adjusted to an increased degree.

[0015] (4) The drive system of any one of (1) to (3), wherein
the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the supply current by changing the inductance of the winding such that the change rate of a magnetic flux linked with the winding is lower than the change rate of the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, in accordance with a control performed by the control device.

[0016] In the configuration of (4), the supply current adjustment unit changes the inductance of the winding such that the change rate of the magnetic flux linked with the winding is lower than the change rate of the inductance of the

winding. The magnetic flux linked with the winding is influential to the voltage and current. The inductance of the winding is influential mainly to the current. The supply current adjustment unit is, therefore, able to adjust the supply current with the change rate of the voltage being lower than the change rate of the current. That is, the supply current adjustment unit is able to adjust the current while less influenced by voltage constraints. Accordingly, the configuration of (4) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with further suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0017] (5) The drive system of any one of (1) to (4), wherein

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the position of at least a portion of the stator core relative to the winding in accordance with a control performed by the control device.

[0018] In the configuration of (5), the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change implemented by moving the position of at least a portion of the stator core relative to the winding. The inductance of the winding can be changed easily. That is, the current to be supplied to the motor is readily adjustable. Accordingly, the torque to be outputted from the motor is readily adjustable.

[0019] (6) The drive system of (5), wherein

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the position of the stator core relative to the winding while maintaining the position of the stator core relative to the rotor in accordance with a control performed by the control device.

[0020] The configuration of (6) moves the position of the stator core relative to the winding while maintaining the position of the stator core relative to the rotor. This can suppress a change of the magnetic flux that flows from the permanent magnet of the rotor to the stator core. That is, a change of the

magnetic flux generated by the permanent magnet and linked with the winding is suppressed. As a result, a change of the voltage is suppressed which otherwise might be caused by movement of the position of the stator core relative to the winding. Accordingly, the configuration of (6) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with further suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0021] (7) The drive system of any one of (1) to (5), wherein

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the winding in accordance with a control performed by the control device.

[0022] The configuration of (7) moves the position of the winding relative to the stator core while maintaining the position of the stator core relative to the rotor. This can suppress a change of the magnetic flux that flows from the permanent magnet of the rotor to the stator core. That is, a change of the magnetic flux generated by the permanent magnet and linked with the winding is suppressed. As a result, a change of the voltage is suppressed which otherwise might be caused by movement of the position of the stator core relative to the winding. Accordingly, the configuration of (7) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with further suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0023] (8) The drive system of any one of (1) to (4), wherein

the stator core includes a plurality of first stator core parts and a second stator core part, each of the plurality of first stator core parts having a facing portion that is opposite to the rotor with a non-magnetic gap therebetween, the second stator core part not having the facing portion, and

the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change implemented by moving one of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part relative to the other.

[0024] In the configuration of (8), the supply current adjustment unit moves one of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part included in the stator core relative to the other. Such a configuration provides a larger change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, as compared with a

configuration in which, for example, one of the stator core and a member different from the stator core is moved relative to the other. Thus, the current to be supplied to the motor can be adjusted over a wider range in accordance with the torque requirement. Accordingly, the configuration of (8) is able to
5 respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with further suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency of the engine.

[0025] (9) The drive system of (8), wherein

the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the
10 change implemented by moving one of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part relative to the other so as to shift from a first state to a second state,

the first state being a state in which the length of a non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator
15 core part is shorter than the length of a non-magnetic gap between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts,

the second state being a state in which the length of the non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part is longer than the length of the non-magnetic gap between adjacent
20 ones of the plurality of first stator core parts.

[0026] In the configuration of (9), in the first state, the length of the non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part is shorter than the length of the non-magnetic gap between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts. In the second
25 state, the length of the non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part is longer than the length of the non-magnetic gap between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts.

In the first state, therefore, a portion of the magnetic flux generated by
30 the current in the winding, which portion flows through the non-magnetic gap between the adjacent first stator core parts, mostly flows through the non-magnetic gap between the first stator core part and the second stator core part. That is, the magnetic flux generated by the current in the winding mostly flows through both the first stator core parts and the second stator core
35 part. In the second state, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit passing through the first stator core part is higher. A greater change of the

magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is obtained. Accordingly, the configuration of (9) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with further suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

5 [0027] (10) The drive system of any one of (1) to (9), wherein

the drive system is an outboard engine mountable to a marine craft serving as the vehicle, and

a motor of the drive system is configured such that a propeller serving as the rotational drive mechanism is directly or indirectly connectable to the motor, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable.

10 [0028] The torque of the outboard engine to be outputted to the propeller varies depending on the status of progress of the marine craft. The configuration of (10) is able to make adjustment for increasing the torque to be outputted to the propeller, with suppression of an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine and an excessive increase of the voltage.

15 Accordingly, the drive system of (10) is able to make adjustment responsive to a requirement of increasing the torque, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency of the outboard engine.

[0029] (11) A control device for a drive system, for use in the drive system of any one of (1) to (9),

20 the control device comprising:

a torque requirement receiving unit configured to receive a torque requirement of the drive system, the torque requirement requesting a torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism; and

25 an adjustment control unit that controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust the current by changing the inductance of the winding, in accordance with the torque requirement received by the torque requirement receiving unit.

30 [0030] The control device of (11) is able to respond to a request for increasing the torque, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency of the drive system.

[0031] (12) A vehicle comprising:

the drive system of any one of (1) to (9); and

35 the rotational drive mechanism connected directly or indirectly to the motor of the drive system, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable, the rotational drive mechanism configured to drive the vehicle by

being driven in rotation by the drive system.

[0032] The torque to be outputted to the rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle varies depending on the traveling status of the vehicle. The vehicle of (12), which is provided with the drive system described above, is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0033] (13) The vehicle of (12), wherein

the vehicle is a wheeled vehicle having a wheel serving as the rotational drive mechanism,

the motor of the drive system is arranged in a position distant from the wheel, and

the vehicle includes a transmission mechanism that transmits rotational power outputted from the motor to the wheel.

[0034] In the vehicle of (13), the transmission mechanism transmits the rotational power outputted from the motor to the wheel. A change of setting of the transmission mechanism can be used to set torque transmission characteristics of the torque transmission from the drive system. In the vehicle of (13), the drive system is able to respond to a wider range of variations of the specification.

[0035] (14) The vehicle of (12), wherein

the vehicle is a wheeled vehicle having a wheel serving as the rotational drive mechanism, and

the motor of the drive system is arranged inside the wheel.

[0036] In the configuration of (14), a torque outputted from the motor arranged inside the wheel is transmitted directly to the wheel. A request for a torque to be outputted to the wheel directly influences the torque requirement of the drive system. The vehicle of (14) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque that is outputted directly to the wheel, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0037] (15) The vehicle of (12), wherein

the vehicle is a marine craft provided with a propeller serving as the rotational drive mechanism.

[0038] In the marine craft of (15), a request for a torque to be outputted to the propeller varies depending on the status of progress of the marine craft. The configuration of (15) is able to respond to a requirement of increasing the torque that is outputted to the propeller, with suppression of a decrease in fuel

efficiency of the marine craft.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0039] A drive system, a control device for the drive system, and a vehicle of
5 the present invention are able to make adjustment responsive to a requirement
of increasing a torque with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0040] [Fig. 1] A block diagram showing an outline configuration of a vehicle
10 having mounted thereon a drive system according to a first embodiment of the
present invention.

[Fig. 2] A system configuration diagram showing an outline
configuration of the drive system shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 3] (A) is a schematic diagram for explanation of adjustment made
15 by a supply current adjustment unit included in a generator shown in Fig. 2;
and (B) is a schematic diagram showing a state in which the inductance of a
winding is set lower than that of (A).

[Fig. 4] A circuit diagram schematically showing an equivalent circuit of
a winding included in the generator shown in Fig. 3.

20 [Fig. 5] A flowchart of an operation of the drive system.

[Fig. 6] (A) is a schematic diagram for explanation of adjustment made
by a supply current adjustment unit included in a generator of a drive system
according to a second embodiment; and (B) is a schematic diagram showing a
state in which the inductance of a winding is set lower than that of (A).

25 [Fig. 7]

A schematic diagram showing a generator of a drive system according to
a third embodiment.

[Fig. 8] (A) is a schematic diagram showing a first state of a stator
shown in Fig. 7; and (B) is a schematic diagram showing a second state of the
30 stator shown in Fig. 7.

[Fig. 9] A graph showing output current characteristics relative to the
rotation speed of a rotor included in the generator shown in Fig. 7.

[Fig. 10] A diagram showing a vehicle according to a fourth embodiment
of the present invention.

35 [Fig. 11] A diagram showing a vehicle according to a fifth embodiment of
the present invention.

[Fig. 12] A diagram showing a vehicle according to a sixth embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 13] A diagram showing a vehicle according to a seventh embodiment of the present invention.

5 [Fig. 14] A diagram showing a vehicle according to an eighth embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 15] A diagram showing a vehicle according to a ninth embodiment of the present invention.

10 Description of Embodiments

[0041] Studies conducted by the present inventor about a drive system for driving a rotational drive mechanism mounted on a vehicle is described.

[0042] For example, the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1 changes both the output torque and the rotation speed of the engine when controlling the
15 output of the engine based on the amount of depression of the accelerator pedal depressed by the driver. The change of the rotation speed of the engine directly influences a change of a power generation voltage of the generator. The change of the power generation voltage causes a change of a power generation current of the generator. Therefore, an increase of the power
20 generation current of the generator, which occurs in response to an increase of the output of the engine, is mainly due to an increase of the power generation voltage. The power generation current flows in a winding. The power generation current is impeded by the impedance of the winding. The impedance can be expressed as the product ωL of the inductance of the winding
25 of the generator and the angular velocity of rotation. As the rotation speed of the engine increases, the impedance ωL of the winding which impedes the power generation current increases.

In the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1, therefore, an attempt to increase the power generation current of the generator is likely to result in a
30 greater increase of generated power and the power generation voltage as compared with an increase of the power generation current. For example, an attempt to increase the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine for the purpose of increasing the output of the engine results in an excessive increase of generated power. The present inventor found that the
35 vehicle shown in Patent Literature 1 is likely to generate large power in the generator so that a loss increases.

Moreover, an increase of the output voltage of the generator demands that electrical components have a high breakdown voltage. The present inventor found that the vehicle shown in Patent Literature 1 is likely to cause a high power generation voltage, which means a high output voltage, of the generator so that electrical components need to have a high breakdown voltage. Here, an output current of the generator is precisely controlled by, for example, turning on/off switching elements that are arranged between the generator and the motor. The switching elements with a high breakdown voltage have a high resistance when they are ON, which leads to a decrease in efficiency due to a heat loss of the switching elements. As a result, the fuel efficiency of the vehicle decreases.

[0043] The present inventor made further studies on the above-described problems. In the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1, the output is controlled without distinction between the current, which has a large influence on the output torque of the motor, and the voltage, which has a large influence on the rotation speed of the motor, so that the current and the voltage are highly interactive with each other. The present inventor discovered that this is the reason why the above-described problems occur.

[0044] For solving the above-described problems, the present inventor further made intensive studies.

It has been believed that an increase of a current outputted from a generator is caused mainly by an increase of a voltage, and this is not unique to the vehicle as shown in Patent Literature 1. A voltage is increased by, for example, an increase of the rotation speed, an increase of a magnetic force, or an increase of the number of turns of a winding. A current reaches saturation as the rotation speed increases due to an armature reaction. The increase of the magnetic force or the increase of the number of turns of the winding leads to a size increase.

One conceivable way to increase the current outputted from the generator is reducing the armature reaction which is caused by an inductance. It however has been considered that reducing the inductance of a winding leads to reducing a linkage flux, which makes it difficult to increase the current.

The present inventor focused on a magnetic circuit. A magnetic circuit that influences the inductance is a magnetic circuit for a winding. The magnetic circuit for a winding is different from a magnetic circuit that extends from a magnet of a rotor and passes through a winding. The studies

conducted by the present inventor were based on clear distinction between the magnetic circuit for a winding and the magnetic circuit that extends from a magnet of a rotor and passes through a winding. The present inventor consequently discovered that a large change of the inductance can be implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for a winding.

[0045] As a consequence, the present inventor obtained the following findings: in a drive system, adjusting a current by changing the inductance of a winding in addition to adjusting the rotational power of the engine can reduce interaction between the current and voltage outputted from the generator.

[0046] The drive system of the present invention is accomplished based on the findings above. In the drive system of the present invention, a control device controls an engine output adjustment unit and a supply current adjustment unit in response to a request for an increased torque to be outputted to a rotational drive mechanism. The engine output adjustment unit adjusts rotational power of an engine, to adjust a power generation voltage. The supply current adjustment unit adjusts a current to be supplied to an electrical load device, the adjustment implemented by changing an inductance of a winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through a stator core. The ratio of a current change to a voltage change obtained when changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is higher than that obtained when changing the rotation speed of the engine. Accordingly, the drive system of this embodiment is able to adjust the current to be supplied to the electrical load device with less interaction between the voltage change and the current change as compared with when, for example, only the rotation speed of the engine is changed. Hence, the present invention is able to make adjustment responsive to a requirement of increasing a torque with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0047] Furthermore, a motor of the drive system, which is mounted to a vehicle, is connected directly or indirectly to the rotational drive mechanism, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable. In the vehicle, therefore, the rotational drive mechanism is replaceable. Replacement of the rotational drive mechanism with another mechanism having a different specification may be needed depending on the vehicle specification, user preferences, or the like.

That is, there are a plurality of variations of the vehicle specification.

In the drive system of the present invention, the control device controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit. The drive system is therefore able to respond flexibly to variations of the vehicle specification. The drive system is able to respond to variations of the vehicle specification with a high efficiency. Thus, the drive system of the present invention is able to respond to a change of the vehicle specification with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency as compared with a configuration that adjusts only the rotational power of the engine, for example.

5 [0048] In the following, the present invention is described based on preferred embodiments and with reference to the drawings.

[0049] Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing an outline configuration of a vehicle having mounted thereon a drive system P according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

15 A vehicle V shown in Fig. 1 is a four-wheel automobile. The vehicle V includes the drive system P and a vehicle body D. The vehicle body D of the vehicle V includes four wheels Wa, Wb, Wc, Wd, and a request indication unit A.

[0050] The drive system P is connected to drive wheels Wc, Wd among the wheels Wa to Wd. The drive wheels Wc, Wd are connected to the drive system P via a transmission mechanism G. The drive system P drives the drive wheels Wc, Wd in rotation so that the vehicle V travels.

The drive wheels Wc, Wd represent one example of the rotational drive mechanism of the present invention.

25 [0051] The drive system P is a drive source of the vehicle V. The drive system P includes a generator 10, an engine 14, a control device 15, a converter 16, an inverter 17, and a motor 18. The drive system P outputs mechanical power of the drive system P to the drive wheels Wc, Wd. Details of the drive system P is described later.

30 [0052] The request indication unit A outputs a torque requirement. The request indication unit A has an accelerator operator.

More specifically, the request indication unit A is operated by a driver of the vehicle V. The request indication unit A outputs a request for acceleration of the vehicle V based on an operation and the traveling status of the vehicle V. The request for acceleration of the vehicle V corresponds to a torque for driving the drive wheels Wc, Wd. The request for acceleration of the vehicle V also

serves as a request for output of the vehicle V. The output of the vehicle V corresponds to an output of the motor 18. The request for acceleration of the vehicle V corresponds to a requirement of an output torque of the motor 18. The output torque of the motor 18 corresponds to a current supplied to the motor 18. Therefore, the output torque of the motor 18 corresponds to a current outputted from the generator 10.

The request for acceleration of the vehicle V corresponds to a request for a torque outputted from the drive system P. That is, the request for acceleration of the vehicle V corresponds to a request for a torque outputted from the motor 18. The request indication unit A outputs, as an acceleration request, a torque request requesting a torque outputted from the drive system P. The acceleration request outputted from the request indication unit A corresponds to a current request requesting a current supplied from the generator 10 to the motor 18.

The request indication unit A is connected to the control device 15 of the drive system P. The request indication unit A outputs a signal representing the request to the control device 15 of the drive system P.

[0053] [Drive System]

Fig. 2 is a system configuration diagram showing an outline configuration of the drive system P shown in Fig. 1.

[0054] The drive system P includes the engine 14, the generator 10, the control device 15, the converter 16, the inverter 17, and the motor 18. The drive system P includes a fuel tank 10A, an air cleaner 10B, and a muffler 10D.

[0055] The drive system P may constitute a vehicle drive unit P' that is mountable to and dismountable from the vehicle body D (see Fig. 1) of the vehicle V. In the vehicle drive unit P', the engine 14, the generator 10, the control device 15, the converter 16, the inverter 17, the motor 18, the fuel tank 10A, the air cleaner 10B, and the muffler 10D are integrally assembled. Accordingly, the engine 14, the generator 10, the control device 15, the converter 16, the inverter 17, the motor 18, the fuel tank 10A, the air cleaner 10B, and the muffler 10D, which constitute of the vehicle drive unit P', are integrally mounted to and dismounted from the vehicle body D of the vehicle V.

In a case of a failure of any component of the vehicle drive unit P', the vehicle drive unit P' can be dismounted from the vehicle V, for repair.

By replacing the vehicle drive unit P', mechanism parts provided in the drive system P are entirely replaced. This can reduce the need of an operation

for connecting one portion of the mechanism parts to the remaining portion and adjusting them, which operation would be required when the one portion is replaced. This makes maintenance of the vehicle V easy.

[0056] The engine 14 is an internal combustion engine. The engine 14 causes
5 fuel combustion. Thus, the engine 14 outputs mechanical power. The engine 14 includes an output shaft C. The output shaft C is, for example, a crankshaft. Fig. 2 schematically shows the connection relationship between the engine 14 and the output shaft C. The engine 14 includes a cylinder 142, a piston 143, a connecting rod 145, and a crank case 146. The cylinder 142 and
10 the piston 143 define a combustion chamber. The piston 143 and the crankshaft serving as the output shaft C are connected via the connecting rod 145.

The engine 14 is supplied with air via the air cleaner 10B. The engine 14 is supplied with a fuel from the fuel tank 10A. The engine 14 causes the
15 fuel supplied from the fuel tank 10A to combust in the combustion chamber, so that the piston 143 moves to-and-fro. The crankshaft serving as the output shaft C converts the to-and-fro movement into rotational power. The engine 14 outputs mechanical power through the output shaft C. An exhaust gas generated by the combustion in the engine 14 is discharged via the muffler
20 10D.

[0057] As for power transmission from the engine 14 to the drive wheels Wc, Wd (see Fig. 1), the engine 14 is not connected to the drive wheels Wc, Wd by any mechanical component. All of the rotational power outputted from the engine 14 is once converted into power other than mechanical power in the
25 drive system P. The rotational power generated by the engine 14 is converted exclusively into electric power. More specifically, all of the mechanical power generated by the engine 14 except a loss is converted into electric power by the generator 10. The electric power resulting from the conversion in the generator 10 is converted into mechanical power by the motor 18.

30 The drive system P does not directly drive an external mechanism arranged outside the drive system P by using the rotational power of the engine 14. Therefore, the control of the rotational power of the engine 14 is less influenced by constraints inherent in operation characteristics of the external mechanism. This provides a high degree of freedom in terms of controlling the
35 rotational power of the engine 14.

[0058] The engine 14 includes an engine output adjustment unit 141. The

engine output adjustment unit 141 adjusts the rotational power of the engine 14. The engine output adjustment unit 141 includes a throttle valve adjustment mechanism 141a and a fuel injection device 141b. The throttle valve adjustment mechanism 141a adjusts the amount of air taken in by the engine 14. The fuel injection device 141b supplies a fuel to the engine 14. The engine output adjustment unit 141 controls the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine 14. In this manner, the engine output adjustment unit 141 adjusts the rotational power outputted from the engine 14. For example, the engine output adjustment unit 141 increases the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine 14. This causes an increase of the rotational power of the engine 14. As the rotational power of the engine 14 increases, the rotation speed of the output shaft C increases. The rotation speed of the output shaft C represents the rotation speed of the engine 14.

The engine output adjustment unit 141 changes the rotational power of the engine 14, thus adjusting the voltage and current generated by the generator 10.

[0059] As for power transmission from the engine 14 to the generator 10, the generator 10 is mechanically connected to the engine 14. The generator 10 is connected to the output shaft C of the engine 14. In this embodiment, the generator 10 is directly connected to the output shaft C. The generator 10 receives rotational power from the engine 14, and supplies a current to the motor 18. The generator 10 is, for example, attached to the crank case 146 of the engine 14. Alternatively, for example, the generator 10 may be arranged in a position distant from the crank case 146.

The generator 10 includes a rotor 11, a stator 12, and a supply current adjustment unit 131.

The generator 10 is a three-phase brushless generator. The rotor 11 and the stator 12 constitute a three-phase brushless generator.

[0060] The rotor 11 includes permanent magnets. To be more specific, the rotor 11 includes a plurality of magnetic pole parts 111 and a back yoke part 112. The magnetic pole part 111 is made of a permanent magnet. The back yoke part 112 is made of, for example, a ferromagnetic material. The magnetic pole parts 111 are arranged between the back yoke part 112 and the stator 12. The magnetic pole parts 111 are attached to the back yoke part 112. The plurality of magnetic pole parts 111 are arranged so as to align in a

circumferential direction Z about the rotation axis of the rotor 11, that is, so as to align in the direction of rotation of the rotor 11. The plurality of magnetic pole parts 111 are arranged such that N-poles and S-poles alternate with respect to the circumferential direction Z. The generator 10 is a three-phase brushless generator of permanent magnet type. A winding for supplying a current is not provided on the rotor 11.

[0061] The stator 12 is arranged opposite to the rotor 11. The stator 12 includes a plurality of windings 121 and a stator core 122. The stator core 122 is made of, for example, a ferromagnetic material. The stator core 122 forms a magnetic circuit of the stator 12. The plurality of windings 121 are wound on the stator core 122. The stator core 122 includes a core main body 122a (see Fig. 3) and a plurality of teeth 122b. The core main body 122a functions as a yoke. The plurality of teeth 122b extend from the core main body 122a toward the rotor 11. The plurality of teeth 122b protrude from the core main body 122a toward the rotor 11. The teeth 122b extending toward the rotor 11 have their distal end surfaces opposite to the magnetic pole parts 111 of the rotor 11 with an air gap therebetween. The teeth 122b of the stator core 122 and the magnetic pole parts 111 of the rotor 11 directly face each other. The plurality of teeth 122b, which are arranged at intervals with respect to the circumferential direction Z, align in the circumferential direction Z. Each of the plurality of windings 121 is wound on each of the plurality of teeth 122b. Each winding 121 is wound so as to pass through a slot between the plurality of teeth 122b. Each winding 121 corresponds to any of the three phases, namely, U-phase, V-phase, and W-phase. The windings 121 corresponding to U-phase, V-phase, and W-phase are arranged in order in the circumferential direction Z.

[0062] The rotor 11 is connected to the output shaft C in the engine 14. The rotor 11 is rotated along with rotation of the output shaft C. The rotor 11 has the magnetic pole parts 111 rotating in a state where the magnetic pole parts 111 are opposite to the teeth 122b of the stator core 122. As the rotor 11 rotates, magnetic fluxes linked with the windings 121 change. As a result, an induced voltage is generated in the windings 121. This is how the generator 10 performs power generation. The generator 10 supplies a generated current to the motor 18. The current outputted from the generator 10 is supplied to the motor 18. To be specific, the current outputted from the generator 10 is supplied to the motor 18 via the converter 16 and the inverter 17. As the current outputted from the generator 10 increases, a current supplied from the

converter 16 to the inverter 17 increases, so that a current supplied to the motor 18 increases. A voltage outputted from the generator 10 is supplied to the motor 18 via the converter 16 and the inverter 17.

[0063] In this embodiment, the rotor 11 and the stator 12 have an axial gap structure. The rotor 11 and the stator 12 are opposite to each other with respect to the direction (axial direction) X of the rotation axis of the rotor 11. The plurality of teeth 122b included in the stator 12 protrude in the axial direction X from the core main body 122a. In this embodiment, the axial direction X is a direction in which the rotor 11 and the stator 12 are opposite to each other.

[0064] The supply current adjustment unit 131 adjusts the current to be supplied from the generator 10 to the motor 18. For adjusting the current to be supplied to the motor 18, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121. The supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121. The magnetic circuit for the winding 121 is a magnetic circuit that passes through the stator core 122. This is how the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121. The supply current adjustment unit 131 is a current adjustment mechanism. The magnetic circuit for the winding 121 is, for example, a close-loop circuit. The magnetic circuit for the winding 121 is a circuit that passes through an internal path of the winding 121, then goes out from one end portion (the end portion close to the rotor) of the internal path of the winding 121, then enters one end portion (the end portion close to the rotor) of an internal path of an adjacent winding 121, then passes through the internal path of the adjacent winding 121, then goes out from the other end portion (the end portion remote from the rotor) of the internal path of the adjacent winding 121, and then enters the other end portion (the end portion remote from the rotor) of the internal path of the winding 121. The internal path of the winding 121 is a path provided within the winding 121 so as to extend in the direction in which the rotor 11 and the stator 12 are opposite to each other. The magnetic circuit for the winding 121 partially has a non-magnetic gap such as an air gap. The magnetic circuit for the winding is, for example, made up of the stator core 122 and a non-magnetic gap.

Details of the adjustment of the inductance made by the supply current adjustment unit 131 is described later.

[0065] The converter 16 and the inverter 17 are arranged in an electric power supply path between the generator 10 and the motor 18. The converter 16 is connected to the generator 10. The inverter 17 is connected to the converter 16 and the motor 18. Electric power outputted from the generator 10 is supplied through the converter 16 and the inverter 17 to the motor 18.

The converter 16 rectifies the current outputted from the generator 10. The converter 16 converts a three-phase AC outputted from the generator 10 into a DC. The converter 16 outputs the DC. The converter 16 has an inverter circuit, for example. The converter 16 has a three-phase bridge inverter circuit, for example. The three-phase bridge inverter circuit includes switching elements Sa corresponding to the respective three phases. On/off operations of the switching elements Sa are controlled based on a signal supplied from a position sensor (not shown) that detects the rotation position of the rotor 11.

The operation of the converter 16 is controlled by the control device 15. For example, the converter 16 changes the timing for turning on/off the switching elements Sa relative to a predetermined phase angle in the three-phase AC. In this manner, the converter 16 can adjust the current to be supplied to the motor 18. This is how the converter 16 adjusts the electric power to be supplied to the motor 18.

The adjustment made by the converter 16 is mainly for limiting the current generated by the generator 10. The adjustment made by the converter 16 is different from controlling the current by changing the inductance of the generator 10. The following description is given under the assumption that the limiting of the current made by the converter 16 is minimum.

[0066] It is also possible that the converter 16 has a bridge circuit including diodes. That is, the converter 16 may be configured as a rectifier. In such a case, the converter 16 performs only rectification without performing the control of the current.

[0067] The motor 18 is operated by electric power that is supplied from the generator 10. The motor 18 drives the drive wheels Wc, Wd in rotation. Thus, the motor 18 makes the vehicle V travel. As for power transmission, the motor 18 is not mechanically connected to the generator 10.

The motor 18 is, for example, a three-phase brushless motor. The motor 18 includes a rotor 181 and a stator 182. The rotor 181 and the stator 182 in the motor 18 of this embodiment have the same structure as that of the

rotor 11 and the stator 12 in the generator 10.

[0068] In the drive system P of this embodiment, the generator 10 is electrically connected to the motor 18. It is therefore not necessary to arrange a mechanical power transmission between the generator 10 and the motor 18.

5 This provides a high degree of freedom in terms of arrangement of the generator 10 and the motor 18. For example, it is possible that the generator 10 is provided in the engine 14 while the motor 18 is arranged near the drive wheels Wc, Wd serving as the rotational drive mechanism.

[0069] The rotor and the stator of the motor 18 may be configured differently
10 from those of the generator 10. For example, the number of magnetic poles or the number of teeth of the motor 18 may be different from those of the generator 10. For example, an induction motor or a stepper motor may be adopted as the motor 18. For example, a DC motor with brushes may be adopted as the motor 18.

15 [0070] The motor 18 is mechanically connected to the drive wheels Wc, Wd such that rotational power is transmitted to the drive wheels Wc, Wd. The motor 18 is mechanically connected to the drive wheels Wc, Wd via the transmission mechanism G. More specifically, the rotor 181 of the motor 18 is connected to the transmission mechanism G. A portion of the rotor 181
20 connected to the transmission mechanism G functions as a rotational output unit of the drive system P.

An output of the motor 18 is an output of the drive system P. A request for an output of the drive system P, which means a request for an output of the motor 18, varies depending on the traveling status of the vehicle V. For
25 example, a situation is assumed in which a request for gently increasing the traveling speed is issued when the vehicle V is traveling on a flat terrain at a constant speed. In this case, the degree of acceleration is low, and thus the amount of increase of the output torque required of the motor 18 is relatively small. While the motor 18 is rotating at a constant speed, an induced voltage
30 according to the rotation speed is generated in the motor 18. The induced voltage is generated so as to impede the current that is supplied to the motor 18 for driving the motor 18. Therefore, the current supplied to the motor 18 is relatively small. To respond to the request for gently increasing the traveling speed, an increase of the voltage supplied to the motor 18 is required.

35 On the other hand, a situation is assumed in which a sudden acceleration or uphill traveling of the vehicle V is requested. This situation

requires a relatively large amount of increase of the output torque of the motor 18. In this case, the amount of increase of the current supplied to the motor 18 needs to be large.

[0071] The inverter 17 supplies the current for driving the motor 18 to the motor 18. The inverter 17 is supplied with a DC from the converter 16. The inverter 17 converts the DC outputted from the converter 16 into a three-phase current with phases shifted by 120 degrees. The phases of the three-phase current correspond to the three phases of the three-phase brushless motor, respectively. The inverter 17 has a three-phase bridge inverter circuit, for example. The three-phase bridge inverter circuit includes switching elements Sb each corresponding to each of the three phases. The switching elements Sb are controlled based on a signal supplied from a position sensor (not shown) that detects the rotation position of the rotor 181.

The inverter 17 adjusts on/off operations of the switching elements Sb, to control the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18. For example, the inverter 17 turns on the switching elements Sb based on a pulse-width-modulated signal. The control device 15 adjusts the duty cycle of ON/OFF. Thus, the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18 is controlled to an arbitrary value by the control device 15. This is how the inverter 17 adjusts the electric power to be supplied to the motor 18.

[0072] Each of the inverter 17 and the converter 16 represents one example of the motor power control unit.

[0073] The control device 15 controls the inverter 17. Thus, the control device 15 is able to control the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18 independently of controlling the outputs of the engine 14 and the generator 10. For example, even while the engine 14 and the generator 10 are operating, the control device 15 is able to bring the motor 18 into a stopped state by stopping the supply of the voltage to the motor 18. This provides an increased degree of freedom in terms of controlling the output of the drive system P.

[0074] The adjustment made by the inverter 17 is different from controlling the current by changing the inductance of the generator 10. The adjustment made by the inverter 17 is implemented so as to limit the voltage supplied from the generator 10. The following description is given under the assumption that the limiting of the current made by the inverter 17 is kept minimum.

The inverter 17 may be included in the motor 18. In a case where a DC motor is adopted as the motor 18, the inverter 17 is not provided.

[0075] The control device 15 is connected to the engine output adjustment unit 141 of the engine 14 and the supply current adjustment unit 131 of the generator 10.

5 The control device 15 controls a torque to be outputted from the drive system P.

The control device 15 controls both the engine output adjustment unit 141 and the supply current adjustment unit 131 in accordance with a torque request. The torque request is a request issued to the drive system P, which requests for a torque to be outputted from the drive system P to the drive
10 wheels Wc, Wd. The torque request issued to the drive system P is outputted from the request indication unit A in accordance with the amount of operation of the request indication unit A.

The control device 15 controls the current to be supplied from the generator 10 to the motor 18. Thus, the control device 15 controls the output
15 torque of the motor 18. That is, the control device 15 controls the output torque of the drive system P.

Upon a request for increasing the torque, the control device 15 performs a control so as to increase the current to be supplied to the motor 18. In other words, upon a requirement of increasing the torque, the control device 15
20 performs a control so as to increase the current to be outputted from the generator 10.

The control device 15 also controls the converter 16 and the inverter 17.
[0076] The drive system P of this embodiment adjusts a balance between the inductance of the generator 10 and the rotation of the engine 14 by means of
25 the control device 15. Therefore, the vehicle body D (see Fig. 1) of the vehicle V on which the drive system P is mounted does not need to adjust the balance. The drive system P is dealt with like a power unit that receives the torque request. The vehicle body D of the vehicle V having the drive system P mounted thereon is able to obtain a torque responsive to the request from the
30 drive system P, without the need of its own control device that directly controls the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine 14.

[0077] The control device 15 includes a torque request receiving unit 151 and an adjustment control unit 152.

The control device 15 is constituted of a microcontroller, for example.
35 The control device 15 includes a central processing unit (not shown) working as a computer, and a storage device (not shown). The central processing unit

performs computational processing based on a control program. The storage device stores programs and data concerning computation. The torque request receiving unit 151 and the adjustment control unit 152 are implemented by the central processing unit executing programs.

5 [0078] [Supply Current Adjustment Unit]

Fig. 3(A) and Fig. 3(B) are schematic diagrams for explanation of adjustment made by the supply current adjustment unit 131 provided in the generator 10 shown in Fig. 2. Fig. 3(A) shows a state in which the inductance of the winding 121 is set to the highest settable value. Fig. 3(B) shows a state
10 in which the inductance of the winding 121 is set to a value lower than that of Fig. 3(A).

[0079] Fig. 3(A) illustrates a part of the rotor 11 and a part of the stator 12 provided in the generator 10. The generator 10 in this embodiment includes an SPM (Surface Permanent Magnet) generator. The rotor 11 and the stator
15 12 are opposite to each other. More specifically, the magnetic pole parts 111 of the rotor 11 and the teeth 122b of the stator core 122 of the stator 12 are opposite to each other with the air gap therebetween. The magnetic pole parts 111 are exposed to the stator 12.

[0080] The supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic
20 resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121, to adjust the current to be supplied to the motor 18. In more detail, the supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the winding 121. In this manner, the supply
25 current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122.

The windings 121 are secured to a casing (not shown) of the generator 10. The stator core 122 is supported on the casing such that the stator core 122 is freely movable in the axial direction X relative to the windings 121. The
30 windings 121 are not secured to the teeth 122b. A gap is ensured between each winding 121 having a cylindrical shape and each tooth 122b. The gap is to such an extent that the tooth 122b is freely movable relative to the winding 121.

[0081] The supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the stator core 122 so as
35 to move the teeth 122b in a direction into and out of the cylindrically wound windings 121. In this embodiment, the supply current adjustment unit 131

moves the stator core 122 in the axial direction X. The control device 15 operates the supply current adjustment unit 131 in accordance with the current request.

In Fig. 3, for the purpose of describing the movement of the stator core 122 in an easy-to-understand manner, the supply current adjustment unit 131 is schematically illustrated in the form of a rack-and-pinion mechanism and a motor. Here, mechanisms other than the illustrated one are adoptable as the supply current adjustment unit 131 that moves the stator core 122. For example, a mechanism including a cylindrical member that is arranged concentric with a stator core in threaded engagement with the stator core is adoptable. Such a mechanism is able to move the stator core in the axial direction X by, for example, rotating the cylindrical member relative to the stator core.

The supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the winding 121 while maintaining the position of the stator core 122 relative to the rotor 11. In Fig. 3, the broken lines Q express that the rotor 11 moves in conjunction with the stator core 122 in the axial direction X. A structure for maintaining the relative position between the rotor 11 and the stator core 122 is implemented by, for example, a bearing part 113 rotatably supporting the rotor 11. The position of the bearing part 113 is fixed relative to the stator core 122.

[0082] Fig. 3(A) and Fig. 3(B) illustrate primary magnetic fluxes F1 generated by the magnetic pole parts 111. The line of each magnetic flux F1 represents a primary magnetic circuit through which the magnetic flux F1 generated by the magnetic pole part 111 flows. The magnetic circuit through which the magnetic flux F1 flows is referred to as a magnetic circuit F1.

The primary magnetic flux F1 generated by the magnetic pole part 111 flows through the magnetic pole part 111, the air gap between the magnetic pole part 111 and the tooth 122b, the tooth 122b, the core main body 122a, and the back yoke part 112. In other words, the magnetic circuit F1 is made up of the magnetic pole part 111, the air gap between the magnetic pole part 111 and the tooth 122b, the tooth 122b, the core main body 122a, and the back yoke part 112.

Here, Fig. 3(A) and Fig. 3(B) show three teeth 122b among the plurality of teeth 122b arranged in the circumferential direction. For providing plain illustration of the magnetic circuits F1, Fig. 3(A) and Fig. 3(B) show a state in

which the magnetic pole part 111 is opposite the middle tooth 122b among the three teeth 122b.

[0083] As the rotor 11 rotates, the amount of magnetic flux generated by the magnetic pole part 111 and linked with the winding 121 changes. The change
5 of the amount of magnetic flux linked with the winding 121 causes an induced voltage to occur in the winding 121. That is, power is generated.

The induced voltage caused in the winding 121 depends on the amount of magnetic flux linked with the winding 121. The higher the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F1 is, the smaller the amount of magnetic
10 flux linked with the winding 121 is. The magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F1 depends mainly on the magnetic resistance of the air gap between the tooth 122b and the magnetic pole part 111. The magnetic resistance of the air gap between the tooth 122b and the magnetic pole part 111 depends on an air gap length L1 of the air gap between the tooth 122b and the magnetic pole
15 part 111.

Accordingly, the induced voltage caused in the winding 121 depends on the air gap length L1 of the air gap between the tooth 122b and the magnetic pole part 111.

[0084] Fig. 3(A) and Fig. 3(B) illustrate a primary magnetic flux F2 generated
20 by a current flowing in the winding 121. At a time of power generation, a current caused by the induced voltage flows in the winding 121. The magnetic flux F2 is generated by the current flowing in the winding 121 at the time of power generation. The line of each magnetic flux F2 represents a primary magnetic circuit through which the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current
25 in the winding 121 flows. The magnetic circuit through which the magnetic flux F2 flows is referred to as a magnetic circuit F2. The magnetic circuit F2 is the magnetic circuit for the winding 121. The magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 is made up of a path passing through the inside of the winding 121 and providing the minimum magnetic resistance of the entire magnetic circuit
30 F2.

The magnetic circuit F2 passes through the stator core 122. The magnetic circuit F2 passes through adjacent teeth 122b. In the drawing, three teeth 122b among the plurality of teeth 122b arranged in the circumferential direction are shown. The magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 wound on
35 the middle tooth 122b among the three teeth 122b is illustrated as a typical example. A magnetic circuit F2 for a certain winding 121 passes through a

tooth 122b having the certain winding 121 wound thereon and two teeth 122b adjacent to the certain tooth 122b.

The primary magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through the teeth 122b, the core main body 122a, and the air gap between the two adjacent teeth 122b. In other words, the magnetic circuit F2 is made up of the teeth 122b, the core main body 122a, and the air gap between the two adjacent teeth 122b. The magnetic circuit F2 passing through the stator core 122 includes one air gap. A portion of the magnetic circuit F2 including the air gap is indicated by the bold line. The bold-line portion of the magnetic circuit F2 including the air gap is simply referred to as an air gap F2a. The air gap F2a exists between the winding 121 and the rotor 11. The air gap F2a included in the magnetic circuit F2 exists between the winding 121 and the rotor 11 and between the adjacent teeth 122b. The air gap F2a is a non-magnetic gap. A portion of the magnetic circuit F2 corresponding to the air gap F2a is provided so as to connect respective portions of the two adjacent teeth 122b opposite to the rotor 11.

The magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 includes the air gap F2a between the two adjacent teeth 122b. The magnetic circuit F2 does substantially not include the back yoke part 112 of the rotor 11. Most of the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through the air gap between the two adjacent teeth 122b without going to the back yoke part 112 of the rotor 11, for the following reasons.

[0085] For the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121, the magnetic pole part 111 is considered simply as a magnetic flux path. In this embodiment, the magnetic pole part 111 is made of a permanent magnet whose magnetic permeability is as low as air. The magnetic pole part 111 can therefore be considered as equivalent to air for the magnetic circuit F2. Since the magnetic pole part 111 is equivalent to air, the substantial air gap length of the air gap between the stator 12 and the rotor 11 is equal to a distance L11 from the tooth 122b to the back yoke part 112. The distance L11 from the tooth 122b to the back yoke part 112 includes the thickness of the magnetic pole part 111 with respect to the axial direction X. Thus, the distance L11 is longer than a distance L1 from the tooth 122b to the magnetic pole part 111.

In this embodiment, moreover, the amount of the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 is smaller than the amount of magnetic flux generated by the permanent magnet of the magnetic pole part

111. Most of the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 is less likely to reach the back yoke part 112 across the air gap length L11. Little of the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through the back yoke part 112.

5 Thus, most of the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through the air gap F2a between the teeth 122b rather than through the back yoke part 112 of the rotor 11. In the state shown in Fig. 3(A), the inductance of the winding 121 is set to the highest settable value. In the state shown in Fig. 3(A), the air gap F2a included in the magnetic circuit F2
10 has the highest magnetic resistance among portions of the magnetic circuit F2. The air gap F2a has a higher magnetic resistance than that of a remaining portion F2b of the magnetic circuit F2 other than the air gap F2a.

Accordingly, the ratio of a flux component flowing through the air gap between the teeth 122b to a flux component flowing through the back yoke part
15 112 of the rotor 11 is higher in the magnetic flux F2 than in the magnetic flux F1 which is generated by the magnetic pole part 111.

[0086] The inductance of the winding 121 depends on the magnetic resistance for the winding 121. The inductance of the winding 121 is in reverse proportion to the magnetic resistance for the winding 121.

20 Here, the magnetic resistance for the winding 121 is the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 through which the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows. The magnetic resistance of the stator core 122, which is the magnetic resistance for the winding 121, includes the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a between the two adjacent
25 teeth 122b. In a strict sense, the magnetic flux F2 generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through both the stator 12 and the rotor 11. As described above, however, most of the magnetic flux generated by the current in the winding 121 flows through the air gap between the two adjacent teeth 122b without going to the back yoke part 112 of the rotor 11. Therefore, the
30 magnetic resistance to the winding 121 depends more strongly on the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 passing through the stator 12 than on the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F1 passing through the rotor 11. That is, the inductance of the winding 121 depends more strongly on the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2, which passes through the stator
35 core 122 when viewed from the winding 121 side, than on the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F1, which passes through the rotor 11 when

viewed from the winding 121 side. Accordingly, the inductance of the winding 121 substantially depends on the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2, which passes through the stator core 122 when viewed from the winding 121 side.

5 [0087] The supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the windings 121. In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122. This is how the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121.
10 For example, in case of the supply current adjustment unit 131 moving the stator core 122 in a direction indicated by the arrow X1, the teeth 122b of the stator core 122 are moved in the direction out of the cylindrically wound windings 121.

Fig. 2(B) shows a state having a lower inductance than that of the state
15 shown in Fig. 2(A).

Since the teeth 122b of the stator core 122 are moved out of the windings 121, the volume of the stator core 122 existing within the windings 121 is reduced. As a result, the magnetic flux within the winding 121 spreads. From the viewpoint of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, the length of
20 the air gap F2a constituting the magnetic circuit F2 increases. This increases the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a between the winding 121 and the rotor 11. That is, the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a, whose magnetic resistance is highest, increases. As a result, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core
25 122, increases. Consequently, the inductance of the winding 121 decreases.

The supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a whose magnetic resistance is highest. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 passing through the adjacent teeth 122b. This can cause a
30 larger change of the inductance of the winding 121 as compared with, for example, changing the magnetic resistance of a portion other than the air gap F2a.

[0088] Furthermore, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121 such that the change rate of the inductance of
35 the winding 121 is higher than the change rate of the magnetic flux linked with the winding 121. This is how the supply current adjustment unit 131 adjusts

the current. The supply current adjustment unit 131 of the generator 10 according to this embodiment moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the windings 121 while maintaining the position of the stator core 122 relative to the rotor 11.

5 As the supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the stator core 122 in the direction of the arrow X1, the rotor 11 is accordingly moved in the direction of the arrow X1. Therefore, the position of the stator core 122 relative to the rotor 11 is maintained. This can suppress a change of the air gap length L1 between the teeth 122b and the magnetic pole parts 111, which otherwise might
10 be caused by movement of the stator core 122. Accordingly, a change of the magnetic flux F1 flowing from the magnetic pole part 111 to the stator core 122 is suppressed. That is, a change of the magnetic flux F1 linked with the winding 121 is suppressed.

[0089] Fig. 4 is a circuit diagram schematically showing an equivalent circuit
15 of the winding 121 of the generator 10 shown in Fig. 3(A).

The circuit depicted in Fig. 4 is simplified for the purpose of outlining a change of the voltage and current generated by the generator 10. In addition, illustration of the converter 16 and the inverter 17 is omitted on the assumption that their states are fixed.

20 As shown in Fig. 4, the winding 121 electrically includes an AC voltage source 121A, an inductor 121B, and a resistance 121C.

The AC voltage source 121A outputs an induced voltage E which depends mainly on a magnetic flux Φ linked with the winding 121. More specifically, the induced voltage E depends on the product of the magnetic flux
25 F1 and the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11. An inductance L of the inductor 121B depends mainly on the magnetic resistance of the stator core 122 for the winding 121. A resistance value R of the resistance 121C is a winding resistance. Impedance Zg of the winding 121 is schematically expressed as $((\omega L)^2 + R^2)^{1/2}$.

30 The supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the winding 121 in accordance with the torque request which corresponds to the current request. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122. Thus, the
35 supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance L of the winding 121. The change of the inductance L leads to a change of the impedance Zg.

As a result, a current I to be supplied from the generator 10 is adjusted.

The supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121 such that the change rate of the magnetic flux Φ linked with the winding 121 is lower than the change rate of the inductance L of the winding
 5 121. The supply current adjustment unit 131 adjusts the current I in this manner. Accordingly, the current is adjusted with less change of the induced voltage E .

[0090] Instead of making adjustment by the supply current adjustment unit 131, changing the output (rotational power) of the engine 14 is also conceivable
 10 as a method for adjusting the current to be outputted from the generator 10. The engine output adjustment unit 141 changes the rotation speed of the engine 14, to change the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11, so that the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18 is adjusted.

The output (rotational power) of the engine 14 mainly changes the
 15 rotation speed of the output shaft C, that is, the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11. The rotation speed ω of the rotor 11 influences both the induced voltage E of the winding 121 and the impedance $((\omega L)^2 + R^2)^{1/2}$. Therefore, adoption of only the method of changing the rotation speed of the output shaft C of the engine 14 cannot avoid high interaction between the supply voltage and the supply
 20 current.

In this respect, the generator 10 moves the position of the stator core 122 relative to the winding 121 in accordance with the current request, to change the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122. As a result, the inductance of the
 25 winding 121 is changed. Therefore, the ratio of a current change to a voltage change obtained when changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 is different from that obtained when changing the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11. Accordingly, the generator 10 of this embodiment is able to adjust the current to be supplied to the motor 18 with
 30 less interaction between the voltage change and the current change as compared with when, for example, only the rotation speed of the output shaft C of the engine 14 is changed by the engine output adjustment unit 141.

[0091] In this embodiment, a movement of the position of the stator core 122 relative to the winding 121 causes a change of the magnetic resistance of the
 35 magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122. As a result, the inductance L of the winding 121 is changed, so that the

current is adjusted. This embodiment can gradually change the inductance L because the change of the inductance L is implemented by a change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, which passes through the stator core 122.

5 Instead of changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding which passes through the stator core, changing the substantial number of turns of the winding is also conceivable as a method for changing the inductance. For example, it is conceivable that a terminal provided at an end of the winding and a terminal provided in the middle of the winding are
10 selectively switched for use as a current output terminal. It is also conceivable that a terminal provided in the middle of the winding is short-circuited to another terminal. This changes the substantial number of turns which affect the current. As a result, the inductance is changed.

 Here, in a case of changing the substantial number of turns of the
15 winding, such a change of the substantial number of turns is caused significantly and instantaneously. Therefore, an excessive voltage occurs in the winding. In addition, an excessive current is likely to flow in a short time. In a case of changing the substantial number of turns, it is required that a switching element for switching the current is provided. Furthermore, the
20 switching element needs to have a high breakdown voltage in order to withstand the excessive voltage. The winding needs to be made of a thick wire in order to deal with a change of the excessive current. For these reasons, changing the substantial number of turns of the winding is less efficient. In addition, it involves a size increase of the generator.

25 In this embodiment, the magnetic resistance of the stator core 122 is changed, so that the inductance L of the winding 121 is changed. Thus, the inductance L of the winding 121 can be changed gradually. This can suppress a rapid increase of the voltage occurring in the winding 121. It is therefore possible that a component having a low breakdown voltage is connected to the
30 generator 10. This provides a high efficiency. This also eliminates the need to provide the switching element for switching the current. This also allows use of a relatively thin wire for the winding. A size increase of the generator 10 is suppressed.

[0092] Fig. 5 is a flowchart of an operation of the drive system P.

35 Rotational power outputted from the drive system P to the drive wheels W_c , W_d is controlled by the control device 15 performing a control process.

The control device 15 repeats the control process shown in Fig. 5. The control of the output of the drive system P is described with reference to Figs. 2 to 3, too.

[0093] The torque request receiving unit 151 of the control device 15 receives a request for rotational power (S11). The request for rotational power includes a torque request and a rotation speed request. To be specific, the torque request receiving unit 151 receives the amount of operation of the request indication unit A. The torque request receiving unit 151 obtains the traveling state of the vehicle V. The traveling state of the vehicle V includes the traveling state of the vehicle V itself. The traveling state of the vehicle V includes, for example, setting of the economical driving and/or setting of the followability of the output of the drive system P to an operation of the accelerator. These settings are set by a setting unit (not shown) being operated. The torque request receiving unit 151 obtains the torque request based on the amount of operation of the request indication unit A. More specifically, the torque request receiving unit 151 obtains the request for rotational power based on the amount of operation of the request indication unit A and the traveling state of the vehicle V.

[0094] Then, the adjustment control unit 152 controls rotational power to be outputted from the motor 18 based on the request for rotational power received by the torque request receiving unit 151 (S12). The output of the motor 18 is the output of the drive system P. The adjustment control unit 152 controls the supply current adjustment unit 131 and the engine output adjustment unit 141 in accordance with the received request for rotational power. More specifically, the adjustment control unit 152 controls the torque and the rotation speed to be outputted from the motor 18, based on the request for rotational power received by the torque request receiving unit 151. The adjustment control unit 152 adjusts the current supplied to the motor 18, thus controlling the torque to be outputted from the motor 18. Upon a request for increasing the torque, the adjustment control unit 152 performs a control so as to increase the torque to be outputted from the motor 18. The adjustment control unit 152 controls the torque and the rotation speed to be outputted from the motor 18.

The adjustment control unit 152 controls the amount of adjustment made by the supply current adjustment unit 131 and the amount of adjustment made by the engine output adjustment unit 141. The adjustment control unit 152 controls a distribution between the amount of adjustment made by the

supply current adjustment unit 131 and the amount of adjustment made by the engine output adjustment unit 141.

[0095] The adjustment control unit 152 controls a distribution between the amount of increase of the torque to be outputted from the motor 18 and the amount of increase of the rotation speed to be outputted from the motor 18. As for the control performed by the adjustment control unit 152, a typical example of a control with a large amount of increase of the torque and a typical example of a control with a large amount of increase of the rotation speed is described. The typical example of the control with a large amount of increase of the torque is referred to as a torque control. The typical example of the control with a large amount of increase of the rotation speed is referred to as a speed control. The adjustment control unit 152 performs any of the torque control, the speed control, and a combination of the torque control and the speed control, in accordance with the request received.

[0096] (Speed Control)

In the speed control, the control device 15 increases the rotational power of the engine 14. More specifically, the control device 15 directs the engine output adjustment unit 141 to increase the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine 14. The increase of the power of the engine 14 leads to an increase of the rotation speed of the engine 14 which means the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11 of the generator 10.

In the speed control, the control device 15 does not direct the supply current adjustment unit 131 to perform the adjustment for reducing the inductance L of the winding 121. The supply current adjustment unit 131 maintains the state in which the teeth 122b of the stator core 122 are completely received in the cylindrical shapes of the windings 121, as shown in Fig. 3.

[0097] As the rotation speed ω increases, the induced voltage E of the AC voltage source 121A shown in Fig. 4 increases. The induced voltage E is substantially in proportion to the rotation speed ω . This results in an increase of the output voltage. That is, the voltage supplied to the motor 18 increases. As a result, the rotation speed of the motor 18 increases.

[0098] (Torque Control)

In the torque control, the control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to adjust the position of the stator core 122 so as to reduce the inductance L of the winding 121. The supply current adjustment unit 131

adjusts the position of the stator core 122 so as to increase the magnetic resistance of the stator core 122 for the winding 121. In this embodiment, the supply current adjustment unit 131 moves the stator core 122 in such a direction that the teeth 122b of the stator core 122 are moved out of the cylindrical shapes of the windings 121 shown in Fig. 3. As a result, the inductance L of the winding 121 decreases.

In the drive system P, the control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to adjust the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 in accordance with the torque request. The control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to adjust the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121 in accordance with the current request corresponding to the torque request. In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121. This is how to control the current to be supplied to the motor 18 serving as the electrical load device.

In the drive system P, for example, the control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to increase the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, in accordance with a request for increasing the torque. The control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to increase the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F2 for the winding 121, in accordance with a request for increasing the current, which corresponds to a request for increasing the torque. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 131 reduces the inductance of the winding 121. This can increase the current to be supplied to the motor 18 serving as the electrical load device.

[0099] The supply current adjustment unit 131 changes the inductance of the winding 121 by changing the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a existing between the winding 121 and the rotor 11. The magnetic pole parts 111 moving along with rotation of the rotor 11 cause an alternating magnetic field to occur between the windings 121 and the rotor 11. For example, reducing the magnetic resistance of the air gap F2a existing between the winding 121 and the rotor 11 leads to a reduction of an alternating magnetic field loss. To be exact, a core loss in the magnetic circuit F2 passing through the air gap F2a is reduced. The reduction of the loss enables a large current to be outputted. Accordingly, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 serving as the electrical load device can be adjusted to an increased degree.

[0100] In the torque control, the control device 15 directs the engine output adjustment unit 141 (Fig. 2) to increase the rotational power of the engine 14. More specifically, the control device 15 directs the engine output adjustment unit 141 to increase the amount of air taken in and the amount of fuel injected by the engine 14. The increase of the rotational power of the engine 14 leads to an increase of the rotation speed of the engine 14 which means the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11 of the generator 10.

As the rotation speed ω increases, the induced voltage E of the AC voltage source 121A increases. The induced voltage E is substantially in proportion to the rotation speed ω . The increase of the induced voltage E results in an increase of the current outputted from the generator 10. That is, the current supplied to the motor 18 increases. As a result, the torque of the motor 18 increases.

[0101] The control device 15 performs the control by using, for example, a map in which the inductance, the rotation speed of the rotor 11, and the output current are stored in association with one another. The map is obtained based on the following relationships (i) and (ii), for example. The relationship (i) is the relationship between the rotation speed of the engine 14 and the input current of the motor 18. The relationship (ii) is the relationship between the torque and the rotation speed of the motor 18. The relationship (i) is specified or set based on, for example, measurement or simulation of the generator 10 which have been preliminarily conducted for a plurality of conditions of the inductance L . The relationship (i) includes the relationship between the rotation speed and the output current of the generator 10 as shown in Fig. 9, for example. The relationship (i) also includes an influence of the operations of the converter 16 and the inverter 17. The relationship (ii) is specified or set based on, for example, a result of measurement or simulation of the motor which have been preliminarily conducted.

[0102] For example, the control device 15 determines, as a target, the input current of the motor 18 corresponding to the requested torque of the drive system P . For example, the control device 15 controls the supply current adjustment unit 131 so as to obtain the inductance L that allows the target current to be supplied at the minimum rotation speed of the generator 10.

The control device 15 operates the engine 14 at such a rotation speed that allows the target current to be supplied under the condition of the inductance L obtained. In a case where the current and the voltage are

limited by the converter 16 and the inverter 17, the rotation speed is adjusted based on an influence of the limiting.

Here, it may be acceptable that the control device 15 controls the supply current adjustment unit 131 without using the map. For example, the control
5 performed by the control device 15 may be based on a result of computation of expressions.

[0103] The control device 15 is configured to control both the supply current adjustment unit 131 and the engine output adjustment unit 141. The control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 131 to reduce the
10 inductance of the winding 121 while directing the engine output adjustment unit 141 to increase the rotational power of the engine 14.

Preferably, an entire period in which the supply current adjustment unit 131 reduces the inductance of the winding 121 has an overlap with an entire period in which the engine output adjustment unit 141 increases the
15 rotational power of the engine 14. Preferably, a period in which the supply current adjustment unit 131 is reducing the inductance of the winding 121 has an overlap with a period in which the engine output adjustment unit 141 is increasing the rotational power of the engine 14.

[0104] In this embodiment, upon a request for increasing the torque, the
20 engine 14 increases the rotational power of its output shaft C by means of the adjustment made by the engine output adjustment unit 141. As a result, the rotation speed ω of the rotor 11 of the generator 10 increases. On the other hand, the generator 10 reduces the inductance L of the winding 121 by means of the adjustment made by the supply current adjustment unit 131. As a
25 result, an increase of the impedance Z_g of the winding 121, which depends on the product of the rotation speed ω and the inductance L, is suppressed. This provides a greater increase of the current outputted from the generator 10 as compared with when, for example, the inductance L of the winding 121 is not reduced. Accordingly, a greater increase of the torque outputted from the
30 drive system P is obtained as compared with when, for example, the inductance L of the winding 121 is not reduced.

[0105] To respond to a request for increasing the torque, for example, it is conceivable to increase the rotational power of the engine 14 without reducing the inductance L of the winding 121.

35 In such a case, as the rotational power increases, the rotation speed ω of the rotor increases. The induced voltage increases accordingly. The increase

of the rotation speed ω also increases the impedance Z_g of the winding. Therefore, the increase of the current supplied to the motor is smaller than the increase of the rotational power. As a result, the amount of increase of the torque is small.

5 Increasing the rotational power of the engine 14 without reducing the inductance L of the winding 121 for the purpose of increasing the current results in an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine 14 relative to an increase of the power generation current. The excessive increase of the rotational power decreases the fuel efficiency of the engine 14.

10 In addition, the excessive increase of the rotational power causes an excessive increase of the induced voltage E . For example, in a situation where the rotation speed of the motor 18 becomes substantially constant after increasing, the current supplied to the motor 18 decreases. This makes the impedance Z_g of the winding 121 less influential. Accordingly, a voltage
15 corresponding to the induced voltage E , which has excessively increased, is outputted from the generator 10. Moreover, the converter 16 is arranged between the generator 10 and the motor 18. A high voltage corresponding to the induced voltage E is applied to the switching elements of the converter 16. In general, a switching element having a high breakdown voltage for
20 withstanding a high voltage has a high on-resistance. Thus, a large loss is caused by the switching element.

[0106] In this respect, the generator 10 of this embodiment is configured such that the supply current adjustment unit 131 reduces the inductance L of the winding 121 in response to a request for increasing the torque. As a result, an
25 increase of the impedance Z_g of the winding 121 is suppressed. This allows a greater increase of the output torque of the drive system P to be obtained from the increase of the rotational power of the engine 14 as compared with when, for example, the inductance L is not reduced. In this manner, an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine 14 in response to a request for
30 increasing the torque is suppressed. This improves the fuel efficiency. Also, an excessive increase of the output voltage is suppressed. This allows adoption of a switching element with a low breakdown voltage, whose on-resistance is low. Accordingly, a high efficiency is obtained.

 The drive system P of this embodiment is able to make adjustment
35 responsive to a requirement of increasing the torque with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0107] Furthermore, the drive system P of this embodiment is able to control the torque and the rotation speed to be outputted to the drive wheels Wc, Wd, by adjusting the inductance L of the generator 10 in addition to adjusting the rotational power of the engine 14. Accordingly, the drive system P of this embodiment is able to respond flexibly to variations of the vehicle specification.

For example, the specification of the vehicle V on which the drive system P is mounted may be changed as a result of replacement of the rotational drive mechanism. For example, the specification of the vehicle V has variations depending on the type or size of the drive wheels Wc, Wd mounted to the vehicle V. The torque necessary for driving varies depending on the type or size of the drive wheels Wc, Wd mounted. The drive system P of this embodiment is able to respond to variations of the torque specification by adjusting the rotational power of the engine 14 and the inductance L of the generator 10.

[0108] The drive system P of this embodiment controls the converter 16 and the inverter 17 by means of the control device 15. Thus, the drive system P is able to control the current and voltage to be supplied to the motor 18 independently of the adjustment made on the generator 10. The drive system P is, therefore, able to control the torque and the rotation speed to be outputted from the motor 18 of the drive system P independently of the adjustment made on the generator 10. This provides an increased degree of freedom in terms of controlling the output of the drive system P.

For example, the drive system P directs the converter 16 and the inverter 17 to stop the supply of electric power to the motor 18. In this manner, the drive system P is able to bring the motor 18 into the stopped state even while the engine 14 and the generator 10 are operating.

[0109] [Second Embodiment]

Next, a second embodiment of the present invention is described. In the description of the second embodiment given below, differences from the first embodiment illustrated above is mainly described.

Fig. 6(A) and Fig. 6(B) are schematic diagrams for explanation of adjustment made by a supply current adjustment unit provided in a generator 20 of a drive system according to the second embodiment. Fig. 6(A) shows a state in which the inductance of the winding 121 is set to the highest settable value. Fig. 6(B) shows a state in which the inductance of the winding 121 is set to a value lower than that of Fig. 6(A).

[0110] The positional relationship among windings 221, a stator core 222, and a rotor 21 shown in Fig. 6(A) is the same as the positional relationship thereamong in the first embodiment having been described with reference to Fig. 3(A).

5 A magnetic circuit F21 is a magnetic circuit through which a magnetic flux generated by a magnetic pole part 211 flows. A magnetic circuit F22 is a magnetic circuit for the winding 221. The magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 is made up of a path passing through the inside of the winding 221 and providing the minimum magnetic resistance of the entire magnetic circuit
10 F22. The magnetic circuit F22 passes through the stator core 222. The magnetic circuit F22 passes through two adjacent teeth 222b.

The magnetic circuit F22 passing through the stator core 222 includes an air gap F22a. The air gap F22a exists between the winding 221 and the rotor 21. The air gap F22a included in the magnetic circuit F22 exists
15 between the winding 221 and the rotor 21 and between the two adjacent teeth 222b. The air gap F22a included in the magnetic circuit F22 is provided so as to connect respective portions of the two adjacent teeth 222b opposite to the rotor 21.

The magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 does not pass through a
20 back yoke part 212 of the rotor 21. The magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 includes the air gap F22a between the two adjacent teeth 122b.

[0111] In the state shown in Fig. 6(A), the air gap F22a included in the magnetic circuit F22 has the highest magnetic resistance among portions of the magnetic circuit F22. The air gap F22a has a higher magnetic resistance than
25 that of a remaining portion F22b of the magnetic circuit F22 other than the air gap F22a.

[0112] In the generator 20 shown in Fig. 6, a supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding
30 221, which passes through the stator core 222. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the inductance of the winding 221, to adjust the current to be supplied to the motor 18 (see Fig. 1).

The supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221 without moving the stator core 222 of the stator 22.

35 More specifically, the stator core 222 is secured to a casing (not shown). The rotor 21 is rotatably supported on the casing. The rotor 21 is secured with

respect to the axial direction X. The windings 221 are supported on the casing such that the windings 221 are freely movable in the axial direction X relative to the casing.

The supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221 in the direction for making the teeth 222b move into and out of the cylindrical shapes of the windings 221. In this embodiment, the current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221 in the axial direction X. The supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221 in a direction indicated by the arrow X2, for example. All the windings 221 wound on the teeth 222b provided in the generator 20 are moved integrally. The control device operates the supply current adjustment unit 231 in accordance with the torque request.

[0113] Fig. 6(B) shows a state having a lower inductance than that of the state shown in Fig. 6(A). The state shown in Fig. 6(B) is a state after the windings 221 are moved in the direction of the arrow X2.

In this embodiment, the supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the windings 221 alone. In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 231 moves the position of the stator core 222 relative to the windings 221. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221, which passes through the stator core 222.

For example, when the windings 221 are moved in the direction of the arrow X2, that is, toward the rotor 21, the teeth 222b of the stator core 222 are pulled out of the windings 221. Pulling the teeth 222b out of the windings 221 reduces the volume of the stator core 222 existing within the windings 221. As a result, the length of the air gap F22a included in the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 increases. This increases the magnetic resistance of the air gap F22a between the winding 221 and the rotor 21. That is, the magnetic resistance of the air gap F22a, which has the highest magnetic resistance, is increased. As a result, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 increases. Consequently, the inductance of the winding 221 decreases.

The supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the magnetic resistance of the air gap F22a whose magnetic resistance is highest. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 passing through the adjacent teeth 222b. Accordingly, a

larger change of the inductance of the winding 221 is likely to occur as compared with, for example, changing the magnetic resistance of the portion F22b other than the air gap F22a.

5 In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221, which passes through the stator core 222. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the inductance of the winding 221.

For example, the supply current adjustment unit 231 increases the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F22 for the winding 221 in accordance with a request for increasing the current. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 231 reduces the inductance of the winding 221. As a result, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 (see Fig. 1) can be increased.

10 The supply current adjustment unit 231 changes the inductance of the winding 221 by changing the magnetic resistance of the air gap F22a existing between the winding 221 and the rotor 21. This results in a reduction of an alternating magnetic field loss. Accordingly, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 can be adjusted to an increased degree.

[0114] [Third Embodiment]

Next, a third embodiment of the present invention is described. In the description of the third embodiment given below, differences from the first embodiment illustrated above is mainly described.

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram showing a generator 30 of a drive system according to the third embodiment.

25 A stator core 322 provided in the generator 30 shown in Fig. 7 includes a plurality of first stator core parts 323 and a second stator core part 324.

Each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 is provided with a facing portion 323a that is opposite to the rotor 31 with an air gap therebetween. The plurality of first stator core parts 323 are annularly arranged at intervals. That is, the plurality of first stator core parts 323 align in the circumferential direction Z. The plurality of first stator core parts 323 function as primary teeth in the stator 32. In the specification herein, the first stator core parts 323 may also be referred to as first teeth 323. The length of the facing portion 323a of the first stator core part 323 with respect to the circumferential direction Z is longer than the length of any portion of the first stator core part 323 other than the facing portion 323a with respect to the circumferential direction Z. A winding 321 is wound on each of the first stator

core parts 323.

[0115] The second stator core part 324 is arranged at a position opposite to the rotor 31 across the first stator core parts 323. The second stator core part 324 is not provided with the facing portion 323a that is opposite to the rotor 31.

5 The second stator core part 324 includes a stator yoke portion 324a having an annular shape and a plurality of second teeth 324b. The second teeth 324b protrude from the stator yoke portion 324a and toward the first stator core part 323. The number of the second teeth 324b is equal to the number of the first stator core parts 323. The stator yoke portion 324a and the second teeth 324b
10 may be configured such that substantially all of the magnetic fluxes flowing through the second teeth 324b flow through the stator yoke portion 324a. That is, the second teeth 324b may be formed integral with the stator yoke portion 324a. Alternatively, the second teeth 324b may be formed separate from the stator yoke portion 324a such that they are attachable to the stator
15 yoke portion 324a. The second teeth 324b are arranged so as to align in the circumferential direction Z. The plurality of second teeth 324b are annularly arranged at intervals equal to the intervals of the first stator core parts 323.

[0116] A supply current adjustment unit 331 of the generator 30 of this embodiment moves the position of a part of the stator core 322 relative to the
20 winding 321. The supply current adjustment unit 331 moves one of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324 relative to the other. In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321. This is how the supply current adjustment unit 331 adjusts the current to be
25 supplied to the motor 18.

In more detail, the first stator core parts 323 are secured to a casing (not shown). The second stator core part 324 is supported so as to be rotatable in the circumferential direction Z. The supply current adjustment unit 331 rotates the second stator core part 324 in the circumferential direction Z about
30 the rotation axis of the rotor 31. In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 331 moves the second stator core part 324 from a first state (see Fig. 8(A)) to a second state (see Fig. 8(B)).

[0117] Fig. 8(A) is a schematic diagram showing that the stator 32 illustrated in Fig. 7 is in the first state. Fig. 8(B) is a schematic diagram showing that the
35 stator 32 illustrated in Fig. 7 is in the second state.

In the state shown in Fig. 8(A), the inductance of the winding 321 is set

to the highest settable value. In the state shown in Fig. 8(B), the inductance of the winding 321 is set to a value lower than that of Fig. 8(A).

In the first state shown in Fig. 8(A), each of the plurality of second teeth 324b is positioned with respect to the circumferential direction Z so as to
5 confront each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323. In the first state, an air gap length L32 between each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324 is shorter than an air gap length L33 between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts 323. To be
exact, the air gap length L33 is the length of an air gap formed between
10 respective portions of the first stator core parts 323, each of the portions arranged between the winding 321 and the rotor 31 with respect to a direction in which the rotor 31 and the stator 32 are opposite to each other.

In the second state shown in Fig. 8(B), each of the plurality of second teeth 324b is positioned between adjacent ones of the first stator core parts 323
15 with respect to the circumferential direction Z. In the second state, an air gap length L34 between each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324 is longer than the air gap length L33 between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts 323.

[0118] Adjustment made by the supply current adjustment unit 331 of the
20 generator 30 according to the third embodiment is described.

Fig. 8(A) illustrates a magnetic circuit F31 through which a magnetic flux generated by a magnetic pole part 311 flows, and a primary magnetic flux F32 generated by the current in the winding 321. The magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321 is made up of a path passing through the inside of the winding
25 321 and providing the minimum magnetic resistance of the entire magnetic circuit F32. The magnetic circuit F32 passes through the stator core 322. The magnetic circuit F32 passes through adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323).

The magnetic circuit F32 includes three air gaps. A portion of the
30 magnetic circuit F32 corresponding to an air gap between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323) is referred to as an air gap F32a. Portions of the magnetic circuit F32 corresponding to air gaps each between each of the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323) and the second stator core part 324 is referred to as air gaps F32c. The air gap F32a
35 between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323) exists between the winding 321 and the rotor 31. The air gap F32a included in the

magnetic circuit F32 exists between the winding 321 and the rotor 31 and between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323). The air gap F32a is provided so as to connect mutually opposite end surfaces of the respective two adjacent first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323).

- 5 [0119] In the first state shown in Fig. 8(A), the air gap length L32 between each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323) and the second stator core part 324 is shorter than the air gap length L33 between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 (first teeth 323). The air gap length L33 is the largest air gap length in the magnetic circuit F32.
- 10 In the first state, therefore, the air gap F32a between the adjacent first stator core parts 323 has the highest magnetic resistance among portions of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321. The magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a is higher than the magnetic resistance of any of remaining portions F32b, F32c, and F32d of the magnetic circuit F32 other than the air gap F32a.
- 15 The magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a is higher than the magnetic resistance of the air gap F32c between the first stator core part 323 and the second stator core part 324.

The magnetic flux F32 generated by the current in the winding 321 flows through the adjacent first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324, as shown in Fig. 8(A). The magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321, which passes through the stator core 322, depends on the air gap length L33 between the adjacent first stator core parts 323.

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The magnetic flux F31 generated by the magnetic pole part 311 flows through the two adjacent first stator core parts 323. The magnetic flux F31 flows through one magnetic pole part 311, a gap between the magnetic pole part 311 and the first stator core part 323, the first stator core part 323, the second stator core part 324, an adjacent first stator core part 323, a gap between the first stator core part 323 and the magnetic pole part 311, an adjacent magnetic pole part 311, and the back yoke part 312. In the first state shown in Fig. 8(A), the magnetic flux F31 of the magnetic pole part 311 passes through the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324.

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[0120] In the second state shown in Fig. 8(B), the air gap length L34 between each of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324 is longer than the air gap length L33 between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts 323. Therefore, the magnetic resistance of

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the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321, which passes through the stator core 322, is strongly influenced by the air gap length L34 between the first stator core part 323 and the second stator core part 324. As a result, in the second state, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321, which passes through the stator core 322, is higher than the magnetic resistance in the first state.

The magnetic flux F31 generated by the magnetic pole part 311 flows through one magnetic pole part 311, the gap between the magnetic pole part 311 and the first stator core part 323, and the first stator core part 323. The magnetic flux F31 flows from the first stator core part 323 directly to the adjacent first stator core part 323. The magnetic flux F31 generated by the magnetic pole part 311 flows through a gap between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323. In the second state, the path of the magnetic flux F31 generated by the magnetic pole part 311 is switched in the above-described manner. In the second state, even if the path of the magnetic flux F31 is not switched, at least a portion of the magnetic flux F31 generated by the magnetic pole part 311 is increased, the portion flowing through the gap between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323. The increase of the portion of the magnetic flux F31 flowing through the gap between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323 leads to a substantial increase of the magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a. This is magnetically equivalent to an increase of the air gap length L33 between the two adjacent first stator core parts 323. Thus, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 including the air gap F32a is further increased. The change rate of the inductance of the winding 321 is higher than the change rate of the magnetic flux that is generated by the magnetic pole part 311 and linked with the winding 321.

[0121] As described above, the inductance of the winding 321 is liable to be in reverse proportion to the magnetic resistance for the winding 321. Therefore, the inductance of the winding 321 in the second state is lower than the inductance of the winding 321 in the first state.

The supply current adjustment unit 331 moves one of the plurality of first stator core parts 323 and the second stator core part 324 relative to the other so as to shift from the first state (see Fig. 8(A)) to the second state (see Fig. 8(B)). In this manner, the supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the inductance of the winding 321.

This is how the supply current adjustment unit 331 adjusts the current to be supplied to the motor 18 (see Fig. 1).

The supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a. The supply current adjustment unit 331
5 changes the magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a without changing the air gap length L33 between the first stator core parts 323 serving as the adjacent teeth. Thus, the supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 passing through the first stator core parts 323 serving as the adjacent teeth. In the first state, the air gap F32a has
10 the highest magnetic resistance among portions of the magnetic circuit F32. Therefore, a change of the inductance of the winding 321 can be greater than that obtained when, for example, changing the magnetic resistance of portions other than the air gap F32a.

The supply current adjustment unit 331 changes the inductance of the
15 winding 321 by changing the magnetic resistance of the air gap F32a existing between the winding 321 and the rotor 31. This results in a reduction of an alternating magnetic field loss. Accordingly, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 serving as the electrical load device can be adjusted to an increased degree.

20 [0122] Fig. 9 is a graph showing output current characteristics relative to the rotation speed of the rotor 31 of the generator 30 shown in Fig. 7.

In the graph of Fig. 9, the broken line H1 represents the output current characteristics in the first state shown in Fig. 8(A). In a case of the generator 30 having the output current characteristics represented by the broken line H1,
25 the generator 30 operates in such a manner that the combination of the output current and the rotation speed locates in a region on or below the broken line H1 in the graph of Fig. 9. The solid line H2 represents the output current characteristics in the second state shown in Fig. 8(B). In a case of the generator 30 having the output current characteristics represented by the solid
30 line H2, the generator 30 operates in such a manner that the combination of the output current and the rotation speed locates in a region on or below the solid line H2. Here, the graph of Fig. 9 shows the characteristics obtained when a supply voltage adjustment unit 344 (see Fig. 7) is not operated, for describing a current control in an easy-to-understand manner.

35 The adjustment made in the generator 30 is described with reference to the graph of Fig. 9.

[0123] Focusing on the output current obtained in the first state represented by the broken line H1, the output current increases as the rotation speed increases. The rotation speed of the rotor 31 is, therefore, also usable to adjust the output current of the generator 30. The rotation speed of the rotor 31 corresponds to the rotation speed of the output shaft C (see Fig. 2) of the engine 14.

In the first state, the increase of the output current in accordance with the increase of the rotation speed is steep in a region where the rotation speed of the rotor 31 is relatively low. In the first state, the increase of the output current in accordance with the increase of the rotation speed is gentle in a region where the rotation speed is relatively high. That is, the change rate of the output current relative to the change of the rotation speed is low in the region where the rotation speed is relatively high.

[0124] For example, if the generator 30 is fixed in the first state, a significant increase of the rotation speed of the rotor 31 is required in order to increase the output current in a region where the change rate of the output current relative to the change of the rotation speed is low.

For example, the vehicle V (see Fig. 1) traveling at a high speed requires a further increase of the output torque of the drive system P when the vehicle starts uphill traveling or overtakes another vehicle during traveling. A request for an increased torque is issued in such a situation.

If the request for an increased torque for achieving further acceleration is issued while the state of the supply current adjustment unit 331 is fixed, a further increase of the rotation speed of the rotor 31, which means the rotation speed of the engine 14, is required. That is, an excessive increase of the rotational power of the engine 14 is required in order to increase the output torque.

For example, a situation is assumed in which, when the rotation speed is N1 and the output current is I1, a request for an increased torque is issued so that the current needs to be increased to I2. In this situation, if the generator 30 is fixed in the first state which corresponds to H1 in the graph, an excessive increase of the rotation speed of the rotor 31 occurs. In other words, an excessive increase of the rotation speed of the engine 14 occurs. This decreases the fuel efficiency of the engine 14 itself.

The induced voltage of the winding 321 is substantially in proportion to the rotation speed of the rotor 31. A significant increase of the rotation speed

causes a significant increase of the induced voltage. To withstand the significant increase of the voltage, electrical components need to have a high breakdown voltage. This leads to a decrease in efficiency due to an increased breakdown voltage of the electrical components.

5 [0125] In the torque control, the control device 15 controls the supply current adjustment unit 331 in accordance with the torque request. The torque request corresponds to the current request. The control device 15 changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321, which passes through the stator core 322, in accordance with the current request.
10 Thus, the control device 15 changes the inductance of the winding 321. This is how to adjust the current to be supplied to the motor 18. To be more specific, the supply current adjustment unit 331 moves the second stator core part 324 from the first state (see Fig. 8(A)) to the second state (see Fig. 8(B)). As a result, the output current characteristics change from the one represented by
15 the broken line H1 to the one represented by the solid line H2 in Fig. 9.

For example, the control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 331 (see Fig. 7) to move the second stator core part 324 to create the second state (see Fig. 8(B)). Thus, the control device 15 reduces the inductance. In addition, the control device 15 increases the rotational
20 frequency of the engine 14 to N_2 . As a result, the output current increases to I_2 . The torque outputted from the drive system P increases in accordance with the increase of the output current.

The control device 15 performs the control in the above-described manner. This enlarges the torque adjustment range as compared with when,
25 for example, only the rotational frequency of the engine 14 is increased.

[0126] The control device 15 directs the supply current adjustment unit 331 to adjust the inductance of the winding while directing the engine output adjustment unit 141 to adjust the rotational power of the engine. The control device 15 starts a process of directing the supply current adjustment unit 331
30 to reduce the inductance of the winding 321 before a process of increasing the rotational power of the engine 14 is terminated. That is, the control device 15 performs the control such that there is an overlap between a period in which the supply current adjustment unit 331 is reducing the inductance of the winding 321 and a period in which the engine output adjustment unit 141 is
35 increasing the rotational power of the engine 14.

This provides a smooth increase of the current supplied from the

generator to the motor 18. Accordingly, the torque increases smoothly. In addition, occurrence of a situation can be suppressed in which the rotational power of the engine excessively increases before the output current of the generator 30 reaches a current value corresponding to the requested torque in the process of adjusting the rotational power of the engine 14.

[0127] Next, a rotation speed control is described. Upon a request for increasing the rotation speed, the control device 15 does not reduce the inductance L. The control device 15 directs the engine output adjustment unit 141 (see Fig. 2) to increase the rotational power of the engine 14.

In this embodiment, the control device 15 directs the engine output adjustment unit 141 to increase the rotational power of the engine 14, while maintaining the supply current adjustment unit 331 (see Fig. 7) in the first state (see Fig. 8(A)) which corresponds to the broken line H1 in the graph of Fig. 9.

The induced voltage E (see Fig. 4) generated in the generator 30 is substantially in proportion to the rotation speed ω . In particular, a situation requesting an increase of the voltage generally occurs when impedance Z_m of the motor 18 itself is high. In such a state, the impedance Z_g of the winding 321 is less influential to the output voltage of the generator. Therefore, a voltage according to the induced voltage E is outputted from the generator.

The drive system P is able to respond to a request for increasing the speed, without directing the supply current adjustment unit 331 to reduce the inductance L of the winding 321.

[0128] In order that, instead of the drive system P of this embodiment, a commonly-used generator that is unable to change the inductance can provide output current characteristics as represented by the solid line H2 of Fig. 9, it is necessary to increase the thickness of the winding 321 or the amount of magnets. Increasing the thickness of the winding 321 or the amount of magnets leads to a size increase of the drive system itself. As a result, the mountability to vehicle and the portability of the drive system P are deteriorated. If a commonly-used generator that is unable to change the inductance is configured so as to provide output current characteristics as represented by the solid line H2, such generator cannot provide output current characteristics as represented by the broken line H1.

As a method for adjusting the current to be supplied to the motor 18, for example, use of a DC-DC converter is conceivable. A DC-DC converter

configured to input and output electric power capable of driving the vehicle V, however, cannot avoid a size increase of its component such as a built-in transformer in response to an increase of required electric power.

In the drive system P of this embodiment, the control device 15 controls the supply current adjustment unit 331 so as to change the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit F32 for the winding 321, which passes through the stator core 322, in accordance with the current request. Thus, the control device 15 changes the inductance of the winding 321. This enables the drive system P to adjust the current in accordance with the torque request without increasing the thickness of the winding 321 or the amount of magnets.

[0129] Referring to Fig. 7 again, the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 of the generator 30 is described.

The generator 30 includes the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 in addition to the supply current adjustment unit 331. The supply voltage adjustment unit 344 is under control of the control device 15.

The supply voltage adjustment unit 344 changes a linkage flux that flows from the magnetic pole part 311 of the rotor 31 and linked with the winding 321. In this manner, the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 changes the induced voltage E of the winding 321. This is how the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 adjusts the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18. To be specific, the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 moves the rotor 31 in the axial direction X. Thus, the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 changes an air gap length L31 between the rotor 31 and the stator 32. Such a movement of the rotor 31 in the axial direction X is implemented by, for example, the supply voltage adjustment unit 344 configured to move a bearing part 313 in the axial direction X, the bearing part 313 supporting the rotor 31 in a rotatable manner. The change of the air gap length L31 between the rotor 31 and the stator 32 leads to a change of the magnetic resistance between the rotor 31 and the stator 32. As a result, the amount of the magnetic flux generated by the magnetic pole part 311 and linked with the winding 321 is changed. The voltage generated by the generator 30 is changed accordingly. Controlling the voltage generated by the generator 30 in the drive system P provides an increased degree of freedom in terms of controlling the rotational power outputted from the drive system P.

[0130] As thus far described, the drive system P of this embodiment is able to adjust the voltage to be supplied to the motor 18 in a way other than by the

engine output adjustment unit 141 adjusting the rotational power of the engine 14. This provides an increased degree of freedom in terms of controlling, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0131] The supply voltage adjustment unit 344 achieves more reduction of a variation in the linkage flux linked with the winding 321, the variation caused by the operation of the supply current adjustment unit 331, the more reduction achieved in the following manner.

The linkage flux that flows from the magnetic pole part 311 of the rotor 31 and linked with the winding 321 flows through the stator core 322. Specifically, the linkage flux that flows from the magnetic pole part 311 and linked with the winding 321 flows through the first stator core part 323 and the second stator core part 324.

In response to the supply current adjustment unit 331 moving the second stator core part 324 so as to shift from the first state (see Fig. 8(A)) to the second state (see Fig. 8(B)), the air gap lengths L32, L34 between the first stator core part 323 and the second stator core part 324 are changed. As a result, the amount of the linkage flux that flows from the magnetic pole part 311 of the rotor 31 and linked with the winding 321 is changed.

The supply voltage adjustment unit 344 changes the air gap length L31 between the rotor 31 and the stator 32 so as to compensate for a variation in the linkage flux linked with the winding 321, the variation caused by the operation of the supply current adjustment unit 33. This can reduce the variation in the linkage flux linked with the winding 321, the variation caused by the operation of the supply current adjustment unit 331.

[0132] The supply current adjustment unit 331, in combination with the compensation made by the supply voltage adjustment unit 344, is able to adjust the current while less influenced by voltage constraints.

[0133] In the third embodiment described above, the generator 30 includes both the supply current adjustment unit 331 and the supply voltage adjustment unit 344. The supply voltage adjustment unit, however, is not indispensable in the drive system of the present invention.

[0134] In the third embodiment described above with reference to the current characteristics graph of Fig. 9, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 can be adjusted while controlling the inductance. Here, it is to be noted that in the first embodiment and the second embodiment as well, the current to be supplied to the motor 18 can be adjusted while controlling the inductance.

[0135] [Fourth Embodiment]

Fig. 10 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention.

5 A vehicle V4 shown in Fig. 10 is a wheeled vehicle, which is provided with two wheels Wf, Wr. The vehicle V4 is a motorcycle. A drive system P4 is connected to a drive wheel Wr of the two wheels Wf, Wr. For example, any of the drive systems according to the first to third embodiments described above is used as the drive system P4 of the vehicle V4.

10 A motor 48 included in the drive system P4 is arranged in a position distant from the rest of the drive system P4. The motor 48 is arranged inside the drive wheel Wr. The motor 48 is directly connected to the drive wheel Wr, allowing the drive wheel Wr to be detachable. A rotor 481 of the motor 48 is attached to a wheel W4 of the drive wheel Wr. The rotor 481 of the motor 48 rotates integrally with the wheel W4 of the drive wheel Wr.

15 Since the motor 48 is arranged inside the drive wheel Wr, a torque outputted from the motor 48 is directly transmitted to the drive wheel Wr. A request for a torque outputted from the drive wheel Wr directly corresponds to a request for a torque of the drive system P4. In the vehicle V4, both the engine output adjustment unit 141 and the supply current adjustment unit 331 are controlled. This enables the vehicle V4 to respond to a torque request with suppression of an excessive increase of rotational power of the engine and an excessive increase of the voltage. The vehicle V4 of this embodiment is able to respond to a torque request requesting a torque to be outputted directly to the drive wheel Wr, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency. The motor 48 is an in-wheel motor. The motor 48 which is an in-wheel motor is, for example, arranged within a hub of the drive wheel Wr. The motor 48 which is an in-wheel motor is coaxial with the hub of the drive wheel Wr, and connected to the hub without interposition of a transmission mechanism. Here, it is not always necessary that the motor 48 which is an in-wheel motor is arranged inside the drive wheel Wr.

20 [0136] The size of the drive wheel Wr to which the motor 48 is attached varies depending on the type of the vehicle V4. Vehicles V4 of different types are provided with drive wheels Wr having different diameters, respectively. The torque request varies depending on the diameter of the drive wheel Wr. The vehicle has variations with a plurality of specifications.

35 The drive system P4 of this embodiment is able to control the torque to

be outputted to the drive wheel Wr by adjusting the inductance L of the generator 10 (see Fig. 2) in addition to adjusting the rotational power of the engine 14 (see Fig. 2). Thus, the drive system P4 of this embodiment is able to respond flexibly to variations of the specification of the vehicle V4. The drive system P4 is able to respond to variations of the specification of the vehicle V4 with a high efficiency.

[0137] [Fifth Embodiment]

Fig. 11 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention.

A vehicle V5 shown in Fig. 11 is also a motorcycle.

A motor 58 included in a drive system P5 is arranged in a position distant from a drive wheel Wr. The motor 58 is not an in-wheel motor. The motor 58 is indirectly connected to the drive wheel Wr. The motor 58 is connected to the drive wheel Wr with interposition of a gear 51. The gear 51 transmits rotational power outputted from the motor 58 to the drive wheel Wr. The gear 51 represents one example of the transmission mechanism of the present invention.

Torque transmission characteristics of torque transmission from the drive system P5 are set in accordance with the size of the gear 51. This enables the drive system P5 to respond to a wider range of variations of the vehicle V5.

Examples of the transmission mechanism for transmitting the rotational power from the motor 58 to the drive wheel Wr include a belt, a chain, and a rotating shaft.

[0138] [Sixth Embodiment]

Fig. 12 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to a sixth embodiment of the present invention.

A vehicle V6 shown in Fig. 12 is a snowmobile. The vehicle V6 includes a track belt TB. A drive system P6 drives the track belt TB. The track belt TB represents one example of the rotational drive mechanism.

A torque for driving the track belt TB of the vehicle V6 which is a snowmobile shows a large variation depending on the traveling status of the vehicle V6. The drive system P6 is able to respond to a torque request requesting a torque for driving the track belt TB, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

[0139] [Seventh Embodiment]

Fig. 13 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to a seventh embodiment of the present invention.

A vehicle V7 shown in Fig. 13 is a marine craft. The vehicle V7 includes a propeller (screw) SC7. Specifically, the vehicle V7 is provided with
5 an outboard engine OE serving as a drive system P7. The outboard engine OE is attached to the stern of the vehicle V7 which is a marine craft. The propeller SC7 is provided in the outboard engine OE. The propeller SC7 represents one example of the rotational drive mechanism.

In this embodiment, a motor 78 of the drive system P7 is arranged in a
10 position distant from the rest of the drive system P7. The motor 78 is arranged below the waterline of the vehicle V7 which is a marine craft. The propeller SC7 is attached to an output shaft of the motor 78. The propeller SC7 is connected directly to the motor 78, allowing the propeller SC7 to be detachable.

15 The drive system P7 of this embodiment is able to make adjustment responsive to a request for increasing a torque of the propeller SC7, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency of the outboard engine OE.

In the outboard engine OE, replacement of the propeller SC7 with a propeller having another specification may be needed depending on the
20 specification of the vehicle V7 or user preferences. For example, a case of replacing the propeller SC7 with a propeller having another diameter is assumed. A torque to be outputted to a propeller depends on the type of the propeller. In the drive system P7, the control device controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit. Accordingly,
25 the drive system P7 is able to respond flexibly to variations of the specification of the vehicle V7 and variations of the replaceable propeller SC7.

[0140] Here, the outboard engine serving as the drive system may be structured such that all of the motor, the engine, and the generator are above the waterline. The propeller is arranged below the waterline. In this case,
30 the propeller is indirectly connected to the motor with interposition of a shaft and a gear, for example.

[0141] [Eighth Embodiment]

Fig. 14 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to an eighth embodiment of the present invention.

35 A vehicle V8 shown in Fig. 14 is a marine craft. The vehicle V8 includes a propeller (screw) SC8. A drive system P8 is an inboard engine.

The propeller SC8 is connected indirectly to a motor (not shown) of the drive system P8, allowing the propeller SC8 to be detachable.

The drive system P8 of this embodiment is able to make adjustment responsive to a request for an increased torque to be outputted to the propeller SC8, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

The propeller SC8 has variations which depend on, for example, the specification of the vehicle V8. The drive system P8 is able to respond flexibly to variations of the specification of the vehicle V8 and variations of the propeller SC8.

[0142] [Ninth Embodiment]

Fig. 15 is a diagram showing a vehicle according to a ninth embodiment of the present invention.

A vehicle V9 shown in Fig. 15 is a small planing boat (water vehicle). The vehicle V9 is provided with a propulsion unit K including an impeller IP. A drive system P9 is connected to the impeller IP. The propulsion unit K propels the vehicle V9 by rotating the impeller IP such that seawater, which has been introduced through an inlet, is injected from a water injection port.

The drive system P9 of this embodiment is able to make adjustment responsive to a request for an increased torque to be outputted to the impeller IP, with suppression of a decrease in fuel efficiency.

The impeller IP has variations which depend on, for example, the specification of the vehicle V9 to which the propulsion unit K is mounted. The drive system P9 is able to respond flexibly to variations of the specification of the vehicle V9.

[0143] Vehicles to which the drive system is mounted have been illustrated above. Applications of the drive system of the present invention, however, are not limited thereto, and it may be applicable to a vehicle with three wheels, a vehicle with five or more wheels, and a vehicle with no wheel.

The drive system of the present invention is applicable to, for example, a wheeled vehicle different from the above-described ones. The drive system of the present invention is applicable to, for example, motor tricycles, buses, trucks, golf carts, carts, ATVs (All-Terrain Vehicles), ROVs (Recreational Off-highway Vehicles), and track-type vehicles.

The drive system of the present invention is applicable to, for example, a vehicle in which a drive mechanism different from wheels is driven. The drive system of the present invention is applicable to, for example, industrial

vehicles typified by forklifts, snow blowers, agricultural vehicles, military vehicles, construction machines, airplanes, and helicopters.

[0144] The drive system of the present invention is also applicable to a snowmobile provided with a track belt serving as the rotational drive mechanism. The drive system of the present invention is also applicable to a small planing boat provided with an impeller serving as the rotational drive mechanism.

[0145] It is not always necessary that the engine output adjustment unit of the present invention uses both the throttle valve adjustment mechanism and the fuel injection device for adjustment of the rotational power. For example, the engine output adjustment unit may adjust the rotational power by using one of the throttle valve adjustment mechanism and the fuel injection device. The engine output adjustment unit of the present invention may be, for example, a valve arrangement that adjusts the flow rate of a gaseous fuel. The engine of the present invention may use a liquid fuel or a gaseous fuel.

[0146] The first stator core part 323, which is illustrated as an example of the first stator core part in the third embodiment above, has, in its end portion opposite to the rotor, protruding portions protruding in the circumferential direction Z which means the direction in which the first stator core parts are arranged side by side. It is however not always necessary that the first stator core part of the present invention includes the protruding portions.

[0147] In the embodiments described above, the rotor and the stator having an axial gap structure are illustrated as an example. The drive system of the present invention is also applicable to a radial gap structure in which a rotor and a stator are opposite to each other with an air gap therebetween with respect to a radial direction. The axial direction X (Fig. 3) defined in the axial gap structure of these embodiments is one example of the direction in which the rotor and the stator of the present invention are opposite to each other. In the radial gap structure, the rotor and the stator are opposite to each other with respect to the radial direction.

[0148] In the embodiments described above, the generator including an SPM generator is illustrated as an example. Alternatively, the generator of the present invention may be an IPM (Interior Permanent Magnet) generator.

The air gap illustrated in the embodiments described above is one example of the non-magnetic gap. The non-magnetic gap is a gap made of a single type of a non-magnetic material or a plurality of types of non-magnetic

materials. No particular limitation is put on the non-magnetic material. Examples of the non-magnetic material include air, aluminum, and resins. It is preferable that the non-magnetic gap includes at least an air gap.

[0149] In the embodiments described above, the configuration in which the rotor 11 is connected directly to the output shaft C of the engine 14 is illustrated as a specific example of the configuration in which the rotor 11 is connected to the engine 14. Here, the output shaft C of the engine 14 and the rotor 11 of the generator 10 may be connected with interposition of a transmission mechanism as typified by a belt, a gear, or a drive shaft.

[0150] The embodiments described above illustrate the control device 15 configured to perform any of the torque control, the speed control, and a combination of the torque control and the speed control. The control device, however, may perform the speed control and the torque control alone. Alternatively, the control device may perform the torque control alone.

[0151] In the embodiments described above, the accelerator operator is illustrated as an example of the request indication unit A. Here, the torque request issued to the drive system of the present invention may not always need to be an output of the request indication unit. The following is some examples of the torque request issued to the drive system:

a signal of requesting acceleration issued by an automatic speed control device (cruise control) of the vehicle; or

an output of a switch and volume different from the accelerator operator, which is operated by the driver.

[0152] The embodiments described above illustrate the example in which the control device configured to receive a signal is provided. Here, the torque request issued to the drive system is not limited to an electrical signal. It may be also acceptable that the control device of the present invention is operated by, for example, a wire connected to an operation lever. In such a configuration, the supply current adjustment unit may move the stator core by using a force transmitted from the wire.

[0153] In the embodiments described above, the three-phase brushless motor is illustrated as an example of the motor. The motor of the present invention may be a motor having the same structure as that of the generator illustrated in the embodiments, including the structure of the supply current adjustment unit. For example, like the generator 30, the motor may be structured so as to include the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part

and configured to move one of the first stator core parts and the second stator core part relative to the other.

[0154] In the embodiments described above, the drive system P provided with no battery is illustrated. The drive system of the present invention may be provided with a battery that stores electric power generated by the generator. The generator may be operated by the electric power stored in the battery, to function as a starter of the engine.

In addition, for example, the motor of the drive system may be operated by the electric power stored in the battery. Moreover, for example, both the generator and the battery may concurrently supply electric power to the motor, for operating the motor. It is nevertheless preferable to supply electric power from the generator to the motor, without providing any battery that supplies electric power for driving the motor. Such a configuration eliminates constraints on the engine rotation and the need of any control for protecting the battery, which otherwise might be necessary due to constraints on the battery voltage.

[0155] In the embodiments described above, the control device 15 constituted of a microcontroller is illustrated as an example of the control device. This, however, is not limiting the present invention. The control device may be constituted of a wired logic, for example.

[0156] The generator of the present invention may not always need to be attached to the crank case of the engine. The drive system of the present invention may be arranged in a position distant from the engine.

[0157] The torque request is a request for increasing, decreasing, or maintaining the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism. Thus, a request for causing the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism to rise from zero falls into the torque request. A request for zeroing the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism falls into the torque request. A request for maintaining the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism at zero is substantially equivalent to a request for keeping the drive system from outputting a torque to the rotating mechanism. Therefore, the request for maintaining the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism at zero does not fall into the torque request. In other words, while the torque outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism is maintained at zero, no torque request is inputted. In the present invention,

when the torque request is inputted to the drive system, the control device directs the supply current adjustment unit to change the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core. When the torque is outputted from the drive system to the rotating mechanism,
5 the control device directs the supply current adjustment unit to change the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, in accordance with the torque request inputted to the drive system.

[0158] The change of the inductance of the winding is implemented by
10 changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core. The change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, may be implemented in a plurality of stages or in a single stage, or may be implemented continuously. In other words, the output current characteristics
15 of the generator may be changed in a plurality of stages or in a single stage, or may be changed continuously. The broken line H1 of Fig. 9 represents exemplary output current characteristics obtained when the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is low. The solid line H2 of Fig. 9 represents exemplary output
20 current characteristics obtained when the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is high. That is, the output current characteristics of the generator shown in Fig. 9 are not to be interpreted as limiting the change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, to a two-stage
25 change as illustrated in this embodiment. The output current characteristics of the generator may be changed in a plurality of stages or in a single stage, or may be changed continuously. The output current characteristics represented by the broken line H1 and the solid line H2 of Fig. 9 are contained in the output
30 current characteristics that are changed in a plurality of stages, in a single stage, or continuously. In the present invention, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, may be changed in two stages.

[0159] A situation where the supply current adjustment unit changes the state of the generator from one of a high-resistance state and a low-resistance state
35 to the other is described. In the low-resistance state, the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is

lower than that in the high-resistance state. For example, in a case where the state of the generator is changed so as to increase the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core; the state of the generator before the change is the low-resistance state and the state of the generator after the change is the high-resistance state. In a case where the state of the generator is changed so as to reduce the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core; the state of the generator before the change is the high-resistance state and the state of the generator after the change is the low-resistance state. Thus, no particular limitation is put on the absolute value of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, in each of the high-resistance state and the low-resistance state. The high-resistance state and the low-resistance state are defined in a relative sense. The inductance of the winding in the high-resistance state is lower than the inductance of the winding in the low-resistance state.

In an example described below, exemplary output current characteristics of the generator in the low-resistance state correspond to the broken line H1 of Fig. 9, and exemplary output current characteristics of the generator in the high-resistance state correspond to the solid line H2 of Fig. 9. At the rotation speed (M) corresponding to the intersection M between the broken line H1 and the solid line H2, the generator in the high-resistance state and the generator in the low-resistance state output an equal magnitude of current at the equal rotation speed (M). That is, output current characteristic curves (H1, H2) of the generator obtained before and after the change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, have the intersection therebetween, and there is the rotation speed (M) corresponding to this intersection. Here, an output current characteristic curve means a curve representing the output current of the generator relative to the rotation speed of the rotor.

As shown in Fig. 9, the generator of the present invention is configured such that, in a case where the supply current adjustment unit changes the state of the generator from the low-resistance state to the high-resistance state, the generator in the high-resistance state (H2) is able to output a current (I2) when rotating at a rotation speed (M+) higher than the rotation speed (M), the current (I2) being larger than the maximum current that could be outputted by the generator in the low-resistance state (H1) rotating at the rotation speed

(M+). In the generator of the present invention, the state of the generator is changed so as to increase the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, thus enabling the generator to output a large current that could not be outputted at a relatively high rotation speed before the change.

As shown in Fig. 9, the generator of the present invention is configured such that, in a case where the supply current adjustment unit changes the state of the generator from the high-resistance state to the low-resistance state, the generator in the low-resistance state (H1) is able to output a current when rotating at a rotation speed (M-) lower than the rotation speed (M), the current being larger than the maximum current that could be outputted by the generator in the high-resistance state (H2) rotating at the rotation speed (M-). In the generator of the present invention, the state of the generator is changed so as to reduce the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, thus enabling the generator to output a large current that could not be outputted at a relatively low rotation speed before the change.

As thus far described, the generator of the present invention is configured such that the generator after the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, is able to output a current at the rotation speed (M- or M+) higher or lower than the rotation speed (M), the current being larger than the maximum current that the generator could output at the rotation speed (M- or M+) before the change.

The drive system of the present invention is able to supply a rotational torque different from the rotational torque outputted from the engine and a rotation speed different from the rotation speed outputted from the engine to the rotational drive mechanism.

[0160] The control device 15 controls the supply current adjustment unit 131 as well as the converter 16 and/or the inverter 17 serving as the motor power control unit in accordance with the torque request. In this case, the control device may perform a control of changing the operation mode of the motor power control unit in accordance with the torque request, at the same time as or at a different time than when performing the control of changing the inductance via the supply current adjustment unit in accordance with the torque request. Here, the control of changing the operation mode of the motor

power control unit is a control of changing an on/off pattern of the converter and/or the inverter from one predefined pattern to another predefined pattern. The pattern recited herein may be a pattern whose on/off cycle is constant, or may be a pattern whose on/off cycle varies over time. The control of changing the operation mode of the motor power control unit is distinct from a control of the operation of the motor power control unit. The control of the operation of the motor power control unit is a control for causing the motor power control unit to operate based on a predefined on/off pattern.

[0161] Preferably, as illustrated in the embodiments, the control device of the drive system is configured to control both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit in accordance with at least the torque request and the traveling state of the vehicle. The torque request is for a torque required of the drive system, which is requested as a torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism.

The input to the control device includes at least the torque request and the traveling state of the vehicle. The input to the control device may include the rotation speed request in addition to the torque request. The amount of operation of the request indication unit represents a request for rotational power to be supplied to the motor of the drive system. The request for rotational power includes the torque request and the rotation speed request. The traveling state of the vehicle includes at least one of the traveling state of the vehicle itself, the state of outputting of the motor of the drive system, the state of outputting of the generator of the drive system, and the state of outputting of the engine of the drive system. The traveling state of the vehicle itself includes at least one of the vehicle speed of the vehicle, the torque of the rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle, and the rotation speed of the rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. The state of outputting of the motor of the drive system includes at least either one of the torque and rotation speed of the motor. The state of outputting of the generator of the drive system includes at least either one of the output current and output voltage of the generator. The state of outputting of the engine of the drive system includes at least either one of the torque and rotation speed of the engine. In a case where a transmission machine with a plurality of gears is provided between the motor of the drive system and the rotational drive mechanism, the traveling state of the vehicle may include the number of gears (gear positions) of the transmission machine. In the embodiments described above, no

transmission machine is provided between the motor of the drive system and the rotational drive mechanism. The drive system is able to achieve a function as the transmission machine by controlling both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit.

5 An output of the control device is a control of both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit.

[0162] The control device is configured to determine an output of the control device in accordance with an input to the control device. A specific configuration is, for example, as follows. The control device includes a
10 computer and a storage device as hardware. The storage device stores a program as software for determining an output of the control device in accordance with an input to the control device. The program is a program that causes the computer to perform an operation of determining an output of the control device in accordance with an input to the control device. The control
15 device is able to control both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit, by executing the program so as to cause the computer to perform the above-mentioned operation. It may be possible that the program includes a map used for determining an output of the control device in accordance with an input to the control device. In the map, data about the
20 input to the control device and data about the output of the control device are associated with each other. In such a configuration, the program causes the computer to refer to the map when determining an output of the control device in accordance with an input to the control device. The map already described in the embodiments above.

25 [0163] Preferably, the control device is able to change the control of both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit, depending on a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. This enables the drive system to respond flexibly to variations of the vehicle specification. The vehicle
30 specification is not particularly limited, and it includes the size of the rotational drive mechanism (such as the diameter of the drive wheel or the propeller), the weight of the vehicle, and the like.

In such a case, the control device is configured such that the computer is able to execute different programs depending on a vehicle to which the drive
35 system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. Here, executing different programs includes executing programs that are partially

different (in the map, for example). This configuration includes, for example, configurations shown in the following (I) to (IV).

[0164] (I) The storage device of the control device stores a plurality of programs. Each of the programs corresponds to a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. A program to be executed by the control device is selected in accordance with the vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or the rotational drive mechanism. The control device may be configured to automatically select the program by identifying the vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or the rotational drive mechanism. Alternatively, the control device may be configured to select the program based on the relationship between the voltage and/or current inputted to the motor and the rotation speed outputted from the motor. Moreover, the control device may include an input unit that receives an instruction about the selection of the program, so that the control device selects the program in accordance with the instruction received by the input unit.

[0165] (II) A program stored in the storage device of the control device includes a plurality of maps. Each of the maps corresponds to a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. A map to be referred to by the control device is selected in accordance with the vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or the rotational drive mechanism. The control device may be configured to automatically select the map by identifying the vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or the rotational drive mechanism. Alternatively, the control device may be configured to select the map based on the relationship between the voltage and/or current inputted to the motor and the rotation speed outputted from the motor. Moreover, the control device may include an input unit that receives an instruction about the selection of the map, so that the control device selects the map in accordance with the instruction received by the input unit.

[0166] (III) The control device is capable of installing a program that is appropriate for a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. The storage device may be configured such that the program is rewritable.

[0167] (IV) The control device is capable of installing a map corresponding to a program that is appropriate for a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle. The storage device may be configured such that the program or the map is rewritable.

[0168] In the examples of (I) to (IV) above, the control device is configured such that a control to be performed by the control device is determined in accordance with a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle, the control being about the adjustment of the rotational power of the engine and the adjustment of the output current of the generator, the adjustment of the output current implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core. The control device is configured such that a control to be performed by the control device is determined in accordance with a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle, the control being about the change of the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core. The control device is configured such that a control to be performed by the control device is determined in accordance with a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle, the control being about the change of the inductance of the winding. The control device is configured such that a control to be performed by the control device is determined in accordance with a vehicle to which the drive system is mounted and/or a rotational drive mechanism of the vehicle, the control being about the change of the output current characteristic curve (see Fig. 9) of the generator. As described above, the drive system of each embodiment is able to respond to variations of the vehicle specification by changing software (the program or map). For example, a plurality of types of vehicles including drive systems having substantially the same physical configuration can be manufactured by changing the software instead of changing physical configurations of the vehicles. For example, a plurality of types of vehicles including drive systems having substantially the same physical configuration can be manufactured by changing the software instead of changing the ratio between the rotation speed of the motor of the drive system and the rotation speed of the rotational drive mechanism. In this manner, variations of the vehicle specification can be responded flexibly.

[0169] The present invention is not limited to the examples illustrated above, and for example, the following configuration (15) is adoptable. The embodiments described above can be mentioned as an embodiment of the following configuration (15).

[0170] (15) A control device for use in a drive system mounted on a vehicle

including a rotational drive mechanism, the drive system configured to drive the rotational drive mechanism,

the drive system comprising:

an engine that outputs rotational power, the engine including

5 an engine output adjustment unit that adjusts the rotational power;

a generator that receives rotational power from the engine and

outputs electric power according to the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the generator including a rotor, a stator, and a supply current adjustment unit, the rotor including a permanent magnet, the rotor rotated by

10 the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the stator arranged opposite to the rotor, the stator including a winding and a stator core with the winding wound thereon, the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust a current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing an inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through
15 the stator core; and

a motor connected directly or indirectly to the rotational drive mechanism, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable, the motor driven by the electric power outputted from the generator, to output
20 rotational power to the rotational drive mechanism,

the control device comprising a control device that controls both the engine output adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust the current by changing the inductance of the winding, in accordance with a torque requirement of the drive system, the torque
25 requirement requesting a torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism.

[0171] It should be understood that the terms and expressions used in the embodiments above are for descriptions and have no intention to be construed in a limited manner, do not eliminate any equivalents of features shown and
30 mentioned herein, and allow various modifications falling within the claimed scope of the present invention. The present invention may be embodied in many different forms. The present disclosure is to be considered as providing examples of the principles of the invention. A number of illustrative embodiments are described herein with the understanding that such examples
35 are not intended to limit the invention to preferred embodiments described herein and/or illustrated herein. The embodiments described herein are not

limiting. The present invention includes any and all embodiments having equivalent elements, modifications, omissions, combinations, adaptations and/or alterations as would be appreciated by those in the art based on the present disclosure. The limitations in the claims are to be interpreted broadly
 5 based on the language employed in the claims and not limited to examples described in the present specification or during the prosecution of the application. The present invention should be interpreted broadly based on the language employed in the claims.

10 Reference Signs List

	[0172] P, P4-P9	drive system
	V, V4-V9	vehicle
	10, 20, 30	generator
	11, 21, 31	rotor
15	12, 22, 32	stator
	14	engine
	15	control device
	16	converter
	17	inverter
20	18, 48, 58, 78	motor
	131, 231, 331	supply current adjustment unit
	141	engine output adjustment unit
	151	torque request receiving unit
	152	adjustment control unit
25	323	first stator core part
	324	second stator core part
	344	supply voltage adjustment unit

CLAIMS

1. A drive system mountable to a vehicle including a rotational drive mechanism, the drive system configured to drive the rotational drive
5 mechanism,

the drive system comprising:

an engine that outputs rotational power, the engine including an engine output adjustment unit that adjusts the rotational power;

10 a generator that receives rotational power from the engine and outputs electric power according to the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the generator including a rotor, a stator, and a supply current adjustment unit, the rotor including a permanent magnet, the rotor rotated by the rotational power transmitted from the engine, the stator arranged opposite to the rotor, the stator including a winding and a stator core with the winding
15 wound thereon, the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust a current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing an inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core;

20 a motor connected directly or indirectly to the rotational drive mechanism, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable, the motor driven by the electric power outputted from the generator, to output rotational power to the rotational drive mechanism; and

a control device that controls both the engine output adjustment
25 unit and the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust the current by changing the inductance of the winding, in accordance with a torque requirement of the drive system, the torque requirement requesting a torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism.

30 2. The drive system according to claim 1, wherein

the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, includes at least one non-magnetic gap, and

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be supplied to the motor, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the
35 winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a non-magnetic gap being among the at least one non-magnetic gap, the

non-magnetic gap existing between the winding and the rotor.

3. The drive system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein
the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator
5 core, includes at least one non-magnetic gap, and

the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be supplied to
the motor, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the
winding, the change implemented by changing a magnetic resistance of a
non-magnetic gap being among the at least one non-magnetic gap, the
10 non-magnetic gap whose magnetic resistance being highest when the
inductance of the winding is set to the highest settable value.

4. The drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein
the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the supply current by
15 changing the inductance of the winding such that the change rate of a magnetic
flux linked with the winding is lower than the change rate of the inductance of
the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of
the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, in
accordance with a control performed by the control device.

20

5. The drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein
the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted
from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of
the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of
25 the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the
change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the position of at
least a portion of the stator core relative to the winding in accordance with a
control performed by the control device.

30 6. The drive system according to claim 5, wherein
the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted
from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of
the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of
the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the
35 change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the position of the
stator core relative to the winding while maintaining the position of the stator

core relative to the rotor in accordance with a control performed by the control device.

7. The drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein

5 the supply current adjustment unit adjusts the current to be outputted from the generator, the adjustment implemented by changing the inductance of the winding, the change implemented by changing the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change of the magnetic resistance implemented by moving the winding in
10 accordance with a control performed by the control device.

8. The drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein

the stator core includes a plurality of first stator core parts and a second stator core part, each of the plurality of first stator core parts having a facing
15 portion that is opposite to the rotor with a non-magnetic gap therebetween, the second stator core part not having the facing portion, and

the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the change implemented by moving one of the plurality of first stator core parts
20 and the second stator core part relative to the other.

9. The drive system according to claim 8, wherein

the supply current adjustment unit changes the magnetic resistance of the magnetic circuit for the winding, which passes through the stator core, the
25 change implemented by moving one of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part relative to the other so as to shift from a first state to a second state,

the first state being a state in which the length of a non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator
30 core part is shorter than the length of a non-magnetic gap between adjacent ones of the plurality of first stator core parts,

the second state being a state in which the length of the non-magnetic gap between each of the plurality of first stator core parts and the second stator core part is longer than the length of the non-magnetic gap between adjacent
35 ones of the plurality of first stator core parts.

10. The drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein
the drive system is an outboard engine mountable to a marine craft
serving as the vehicle, and

5 a motor of the drive system is configured such that a propeller serving
as the rotational drive mechanism is directly or indirectly connectable to the
motor, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be detachable.

11. A control device for a drive system, for use in the drive system according
to any one of claims 1 to 9,

10 the control device comprising:

a torque requirement receiving unit configured to receive a
torque requirement of the drive system, the torque requirement requesting a
torque to be outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive
mechanism; and

15 an adjustment control unit that controls both the engine output
adjustment unit and the supply current adjustment unit configured to adjust
the current by changing the inductance of the winding, in accordance with the
torque requirement received by the torque requirement receiving unit.

20 12. A vehicle comprising:

the drive system according to any one of claims 1 to 9; and

the rotational drive mechanism connected directly or indirectly to the
motor of the drive system, allowing the rotational drive mechanism to be
detachable, the rotational drive mechanism configured to drive the vehicle by
25 being driven in rotation by the drive system.

13. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein

the vehicle is a wheeled vehicle having a wheel serving as the rotational
drive mechanism,

30 the motor of the drive system is arranged in a position distant from the
wheel, and

the vehicle includes a transmission mechanism that transmits
rotational power outputted from the motor to the wheel.

35 14. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein

the vehicle is a wheeled vehicle having a wheel serving as the rotational

drive mechanism, and

the motor of the drive system is arranged inside the wheel.

15. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein

5 the vehicle is a marine craft provided with a propeller serving as the rotational drive mechanism.

FIG.1

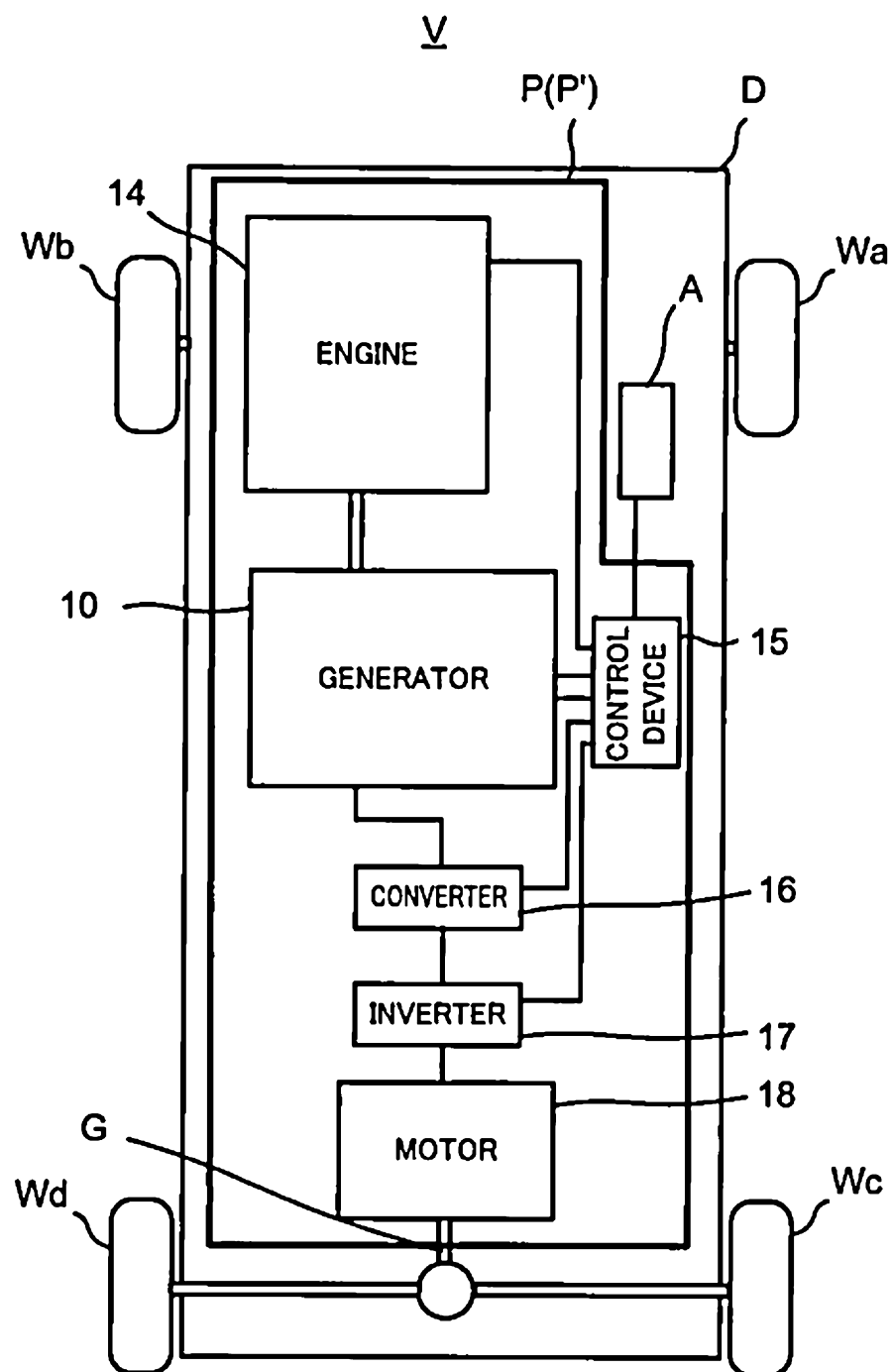


FIG.2

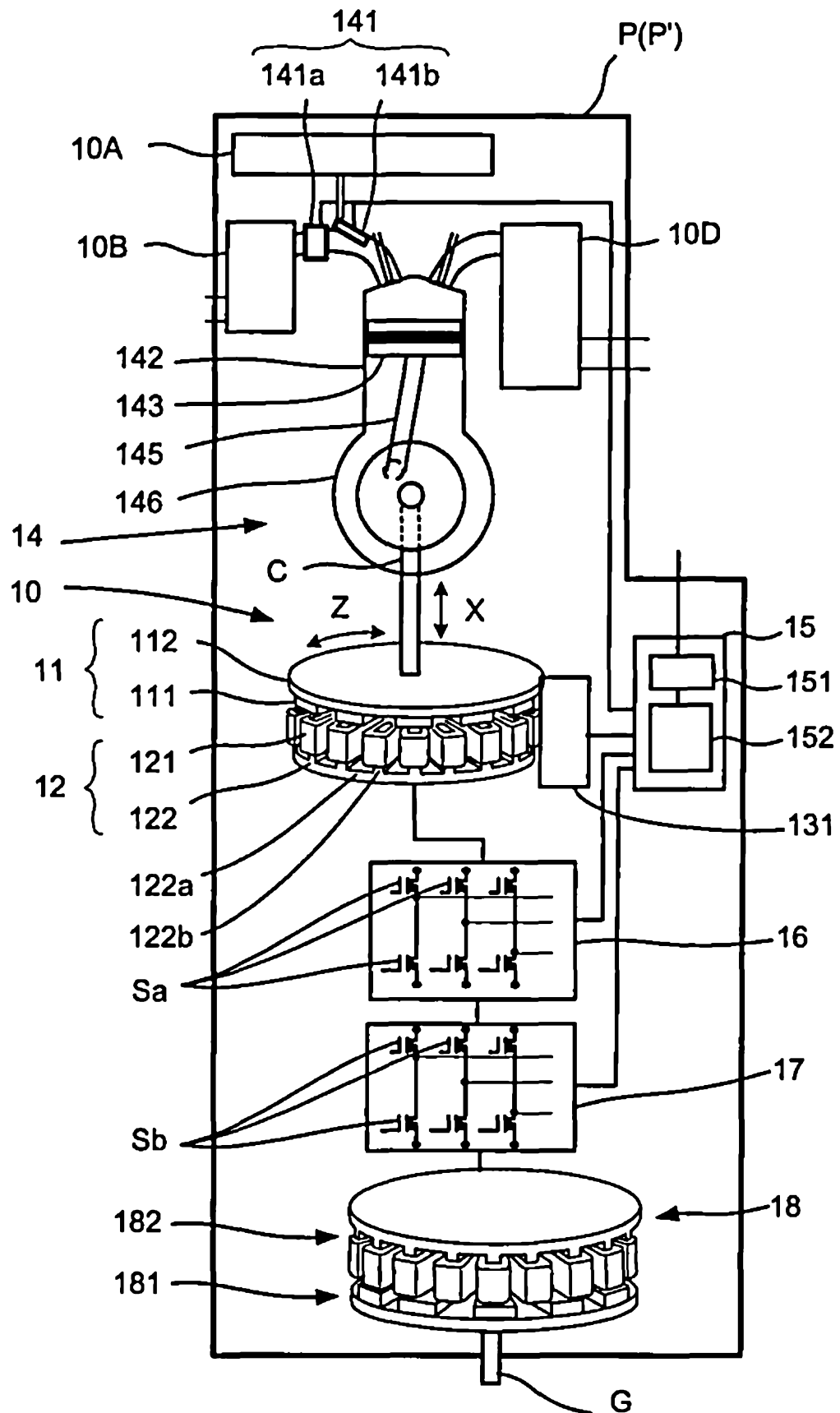


FIG.3

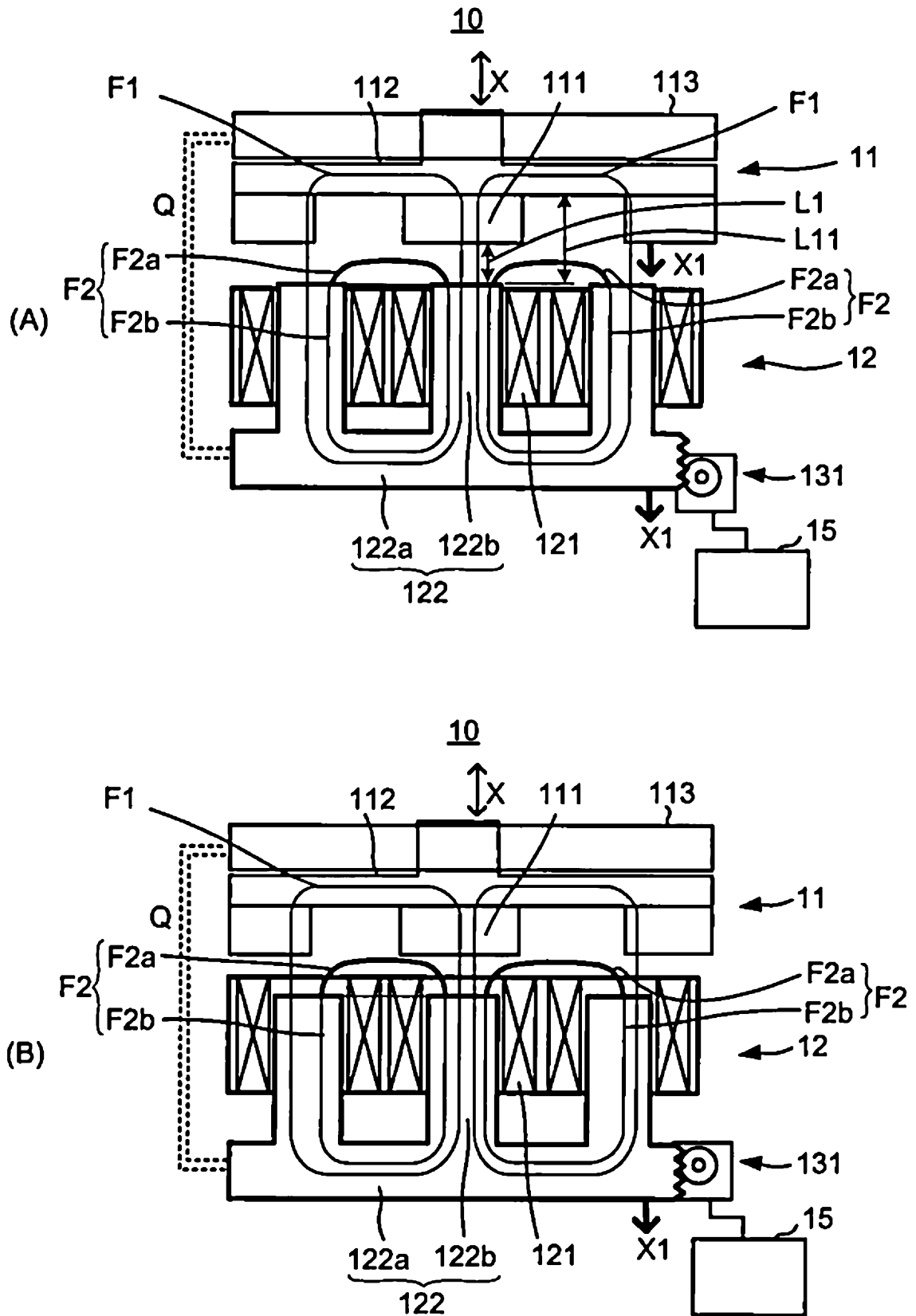


FIG.4

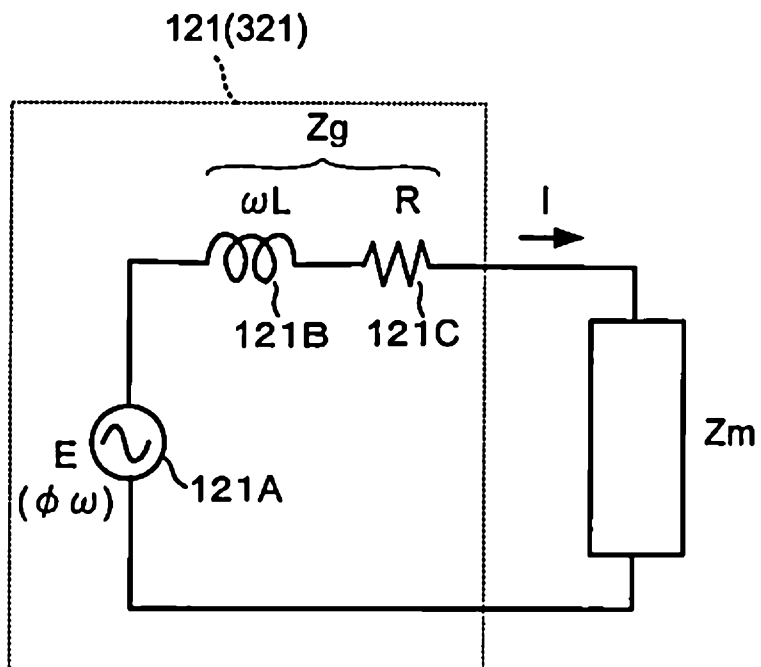


FIG.5

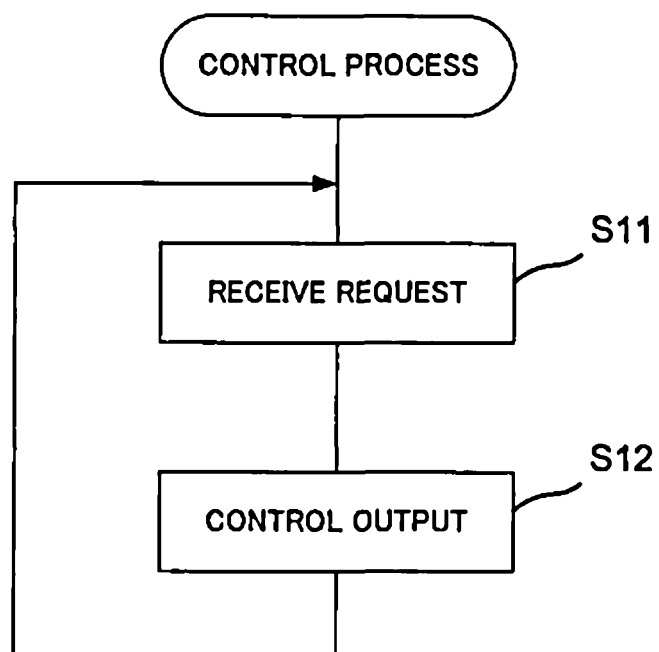


FIG.6

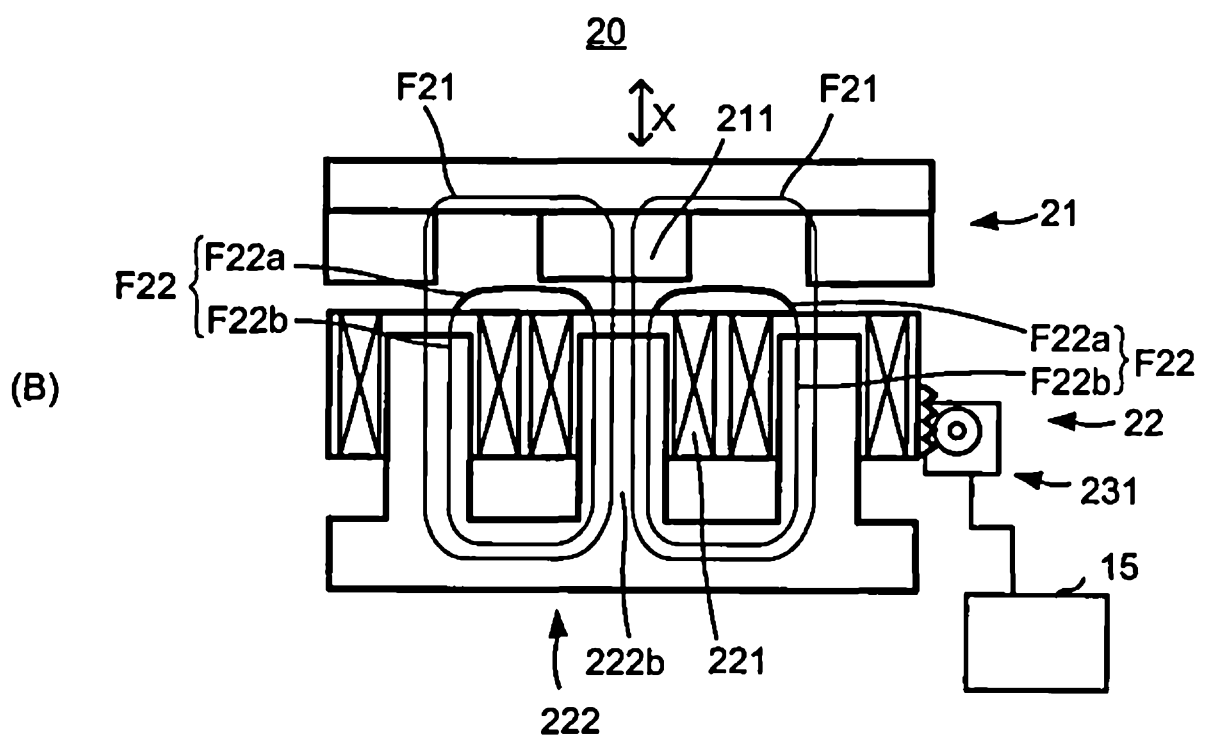
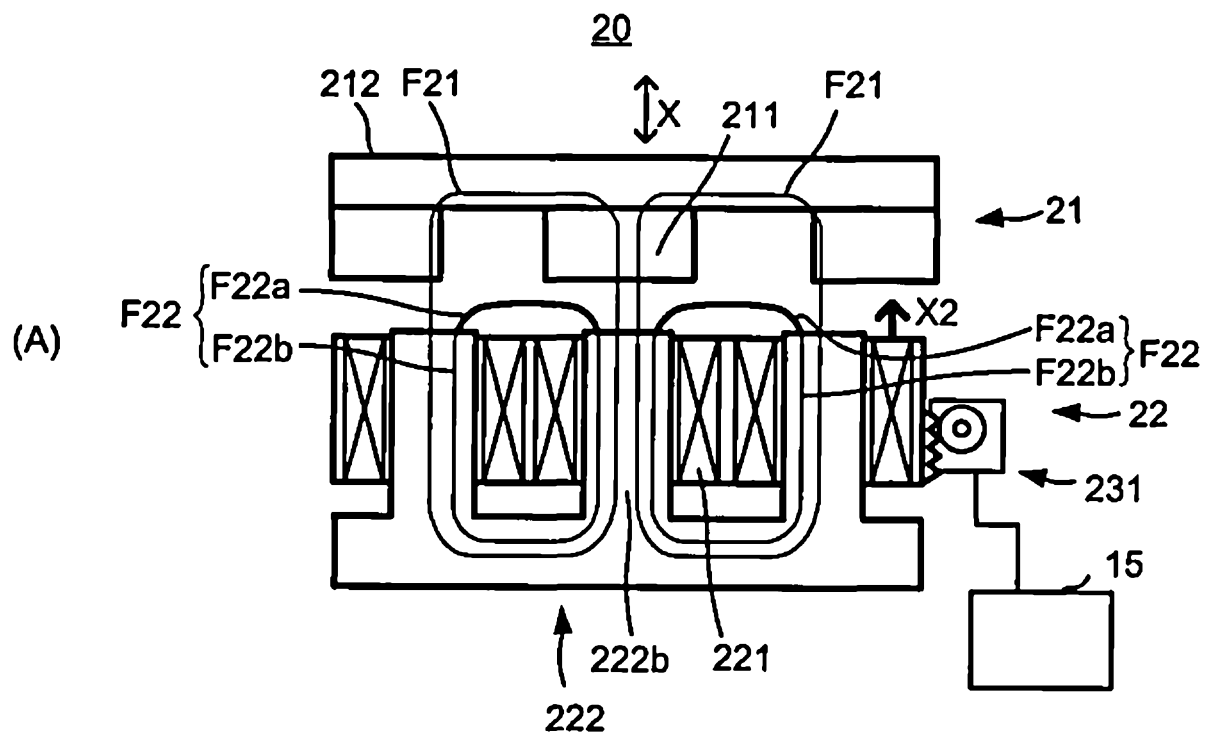


FIG.7

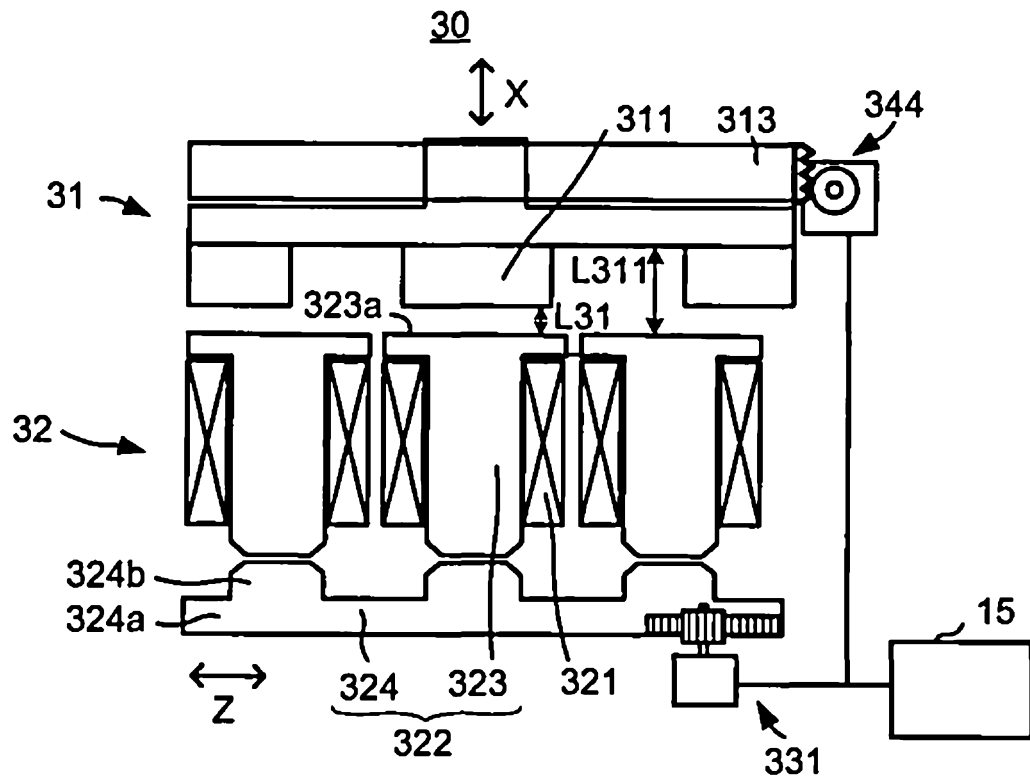


FIG.8

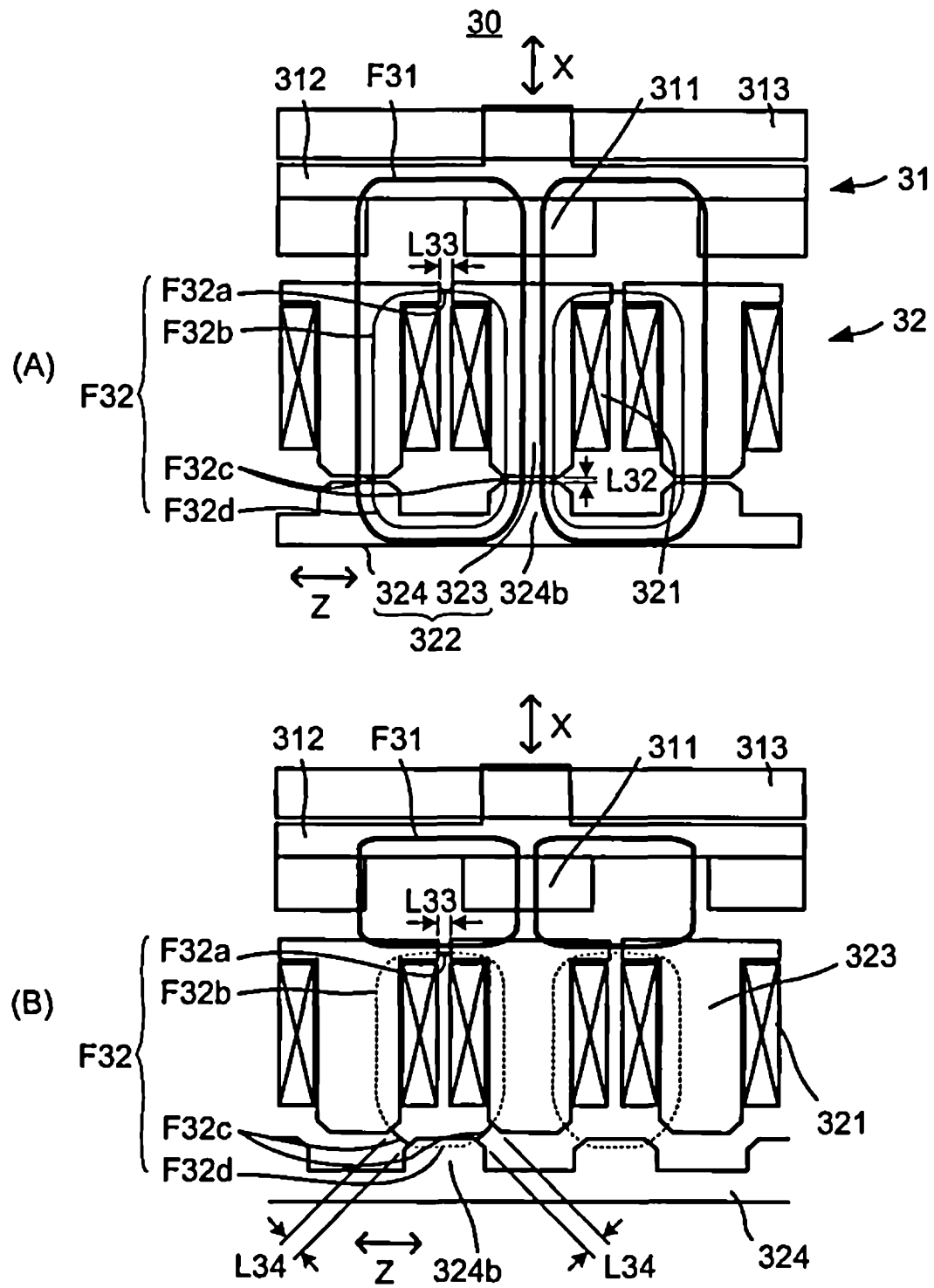


FIG.9

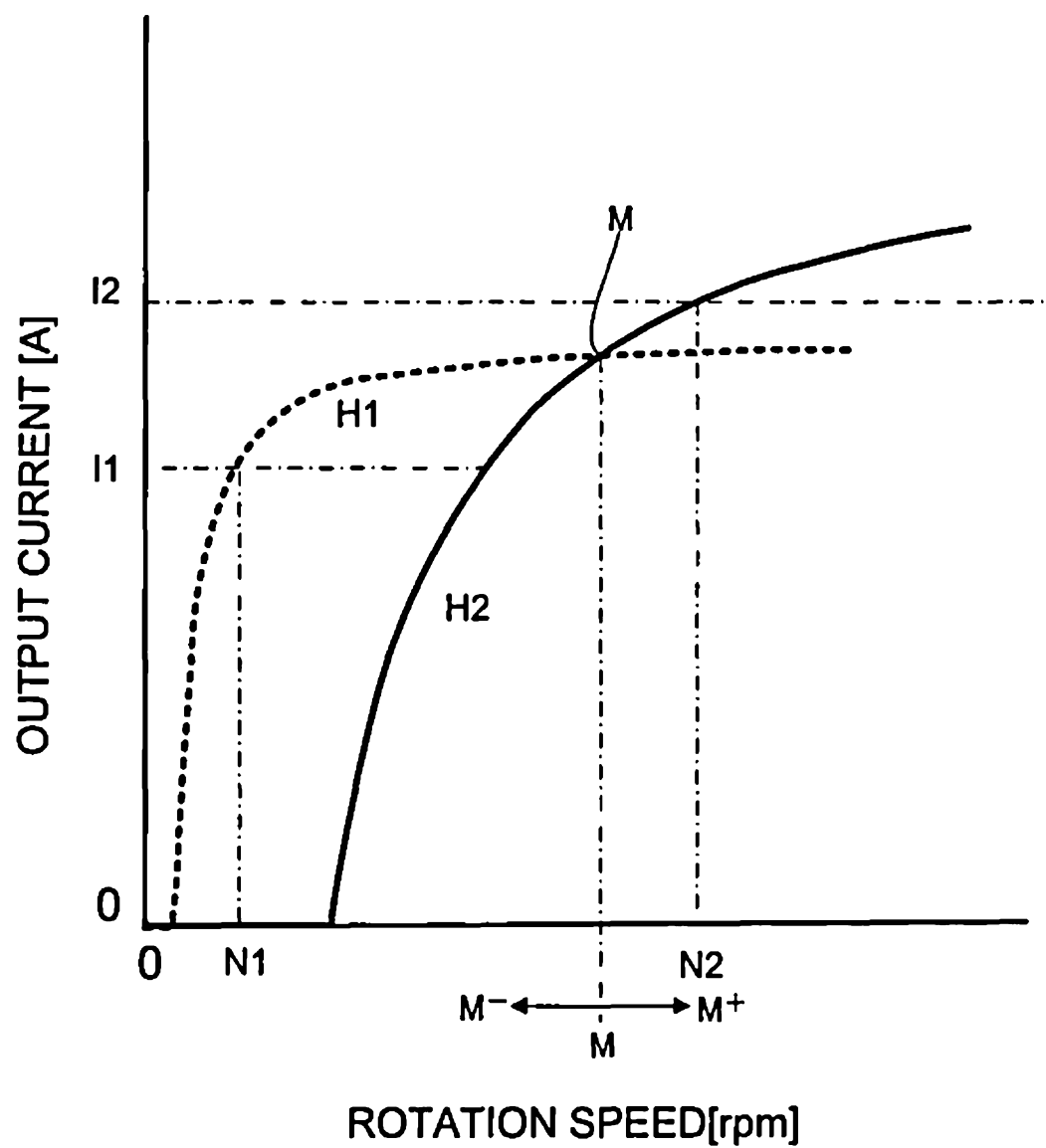


FIG.10

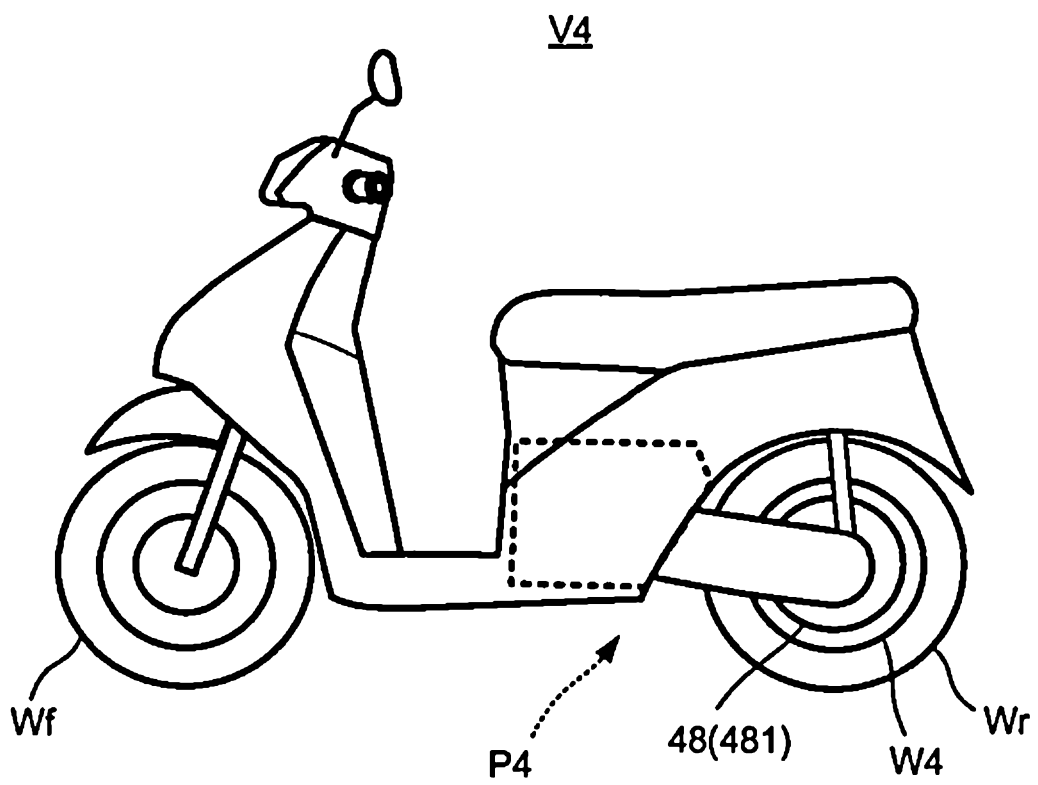


FIG.11

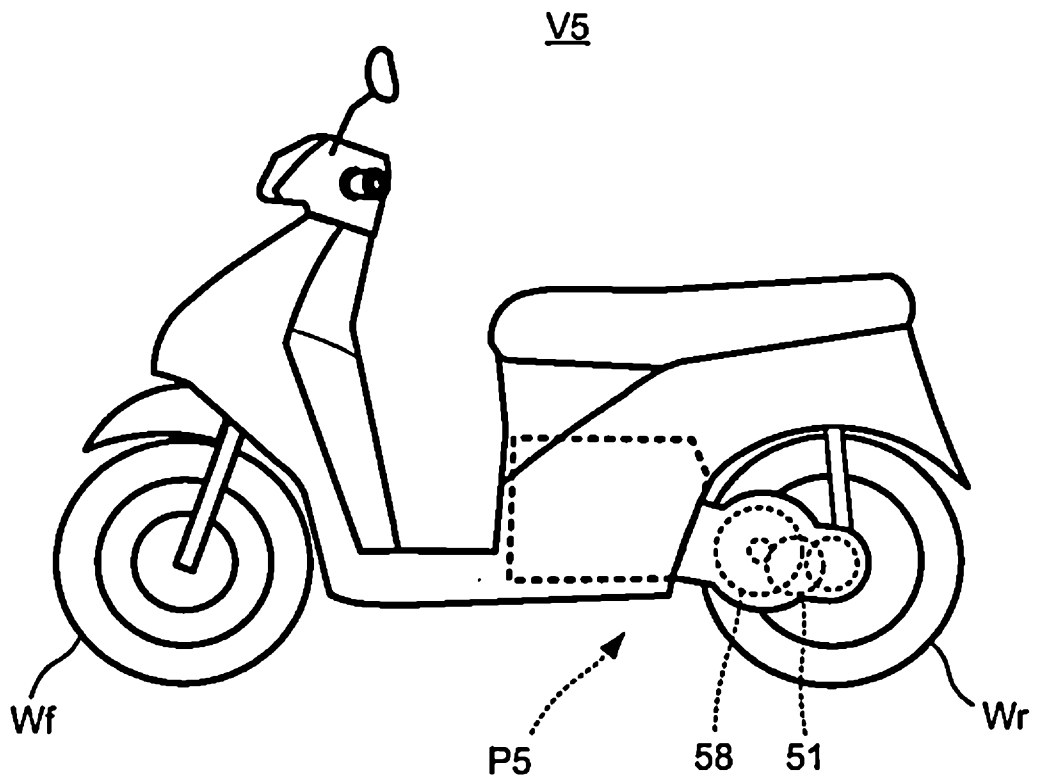


FIG.12

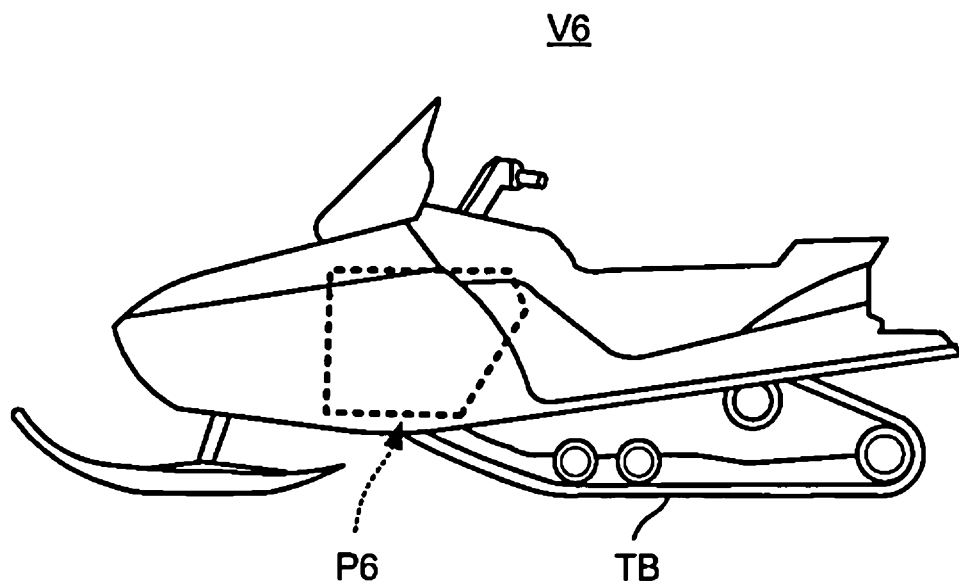


FIG.13

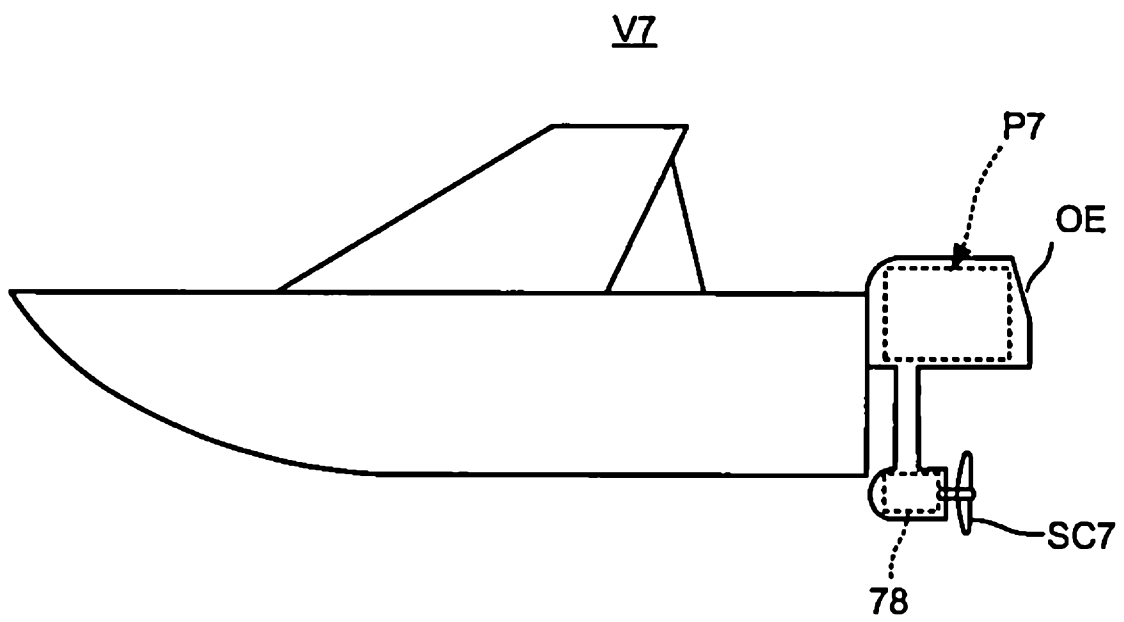


FIG.14

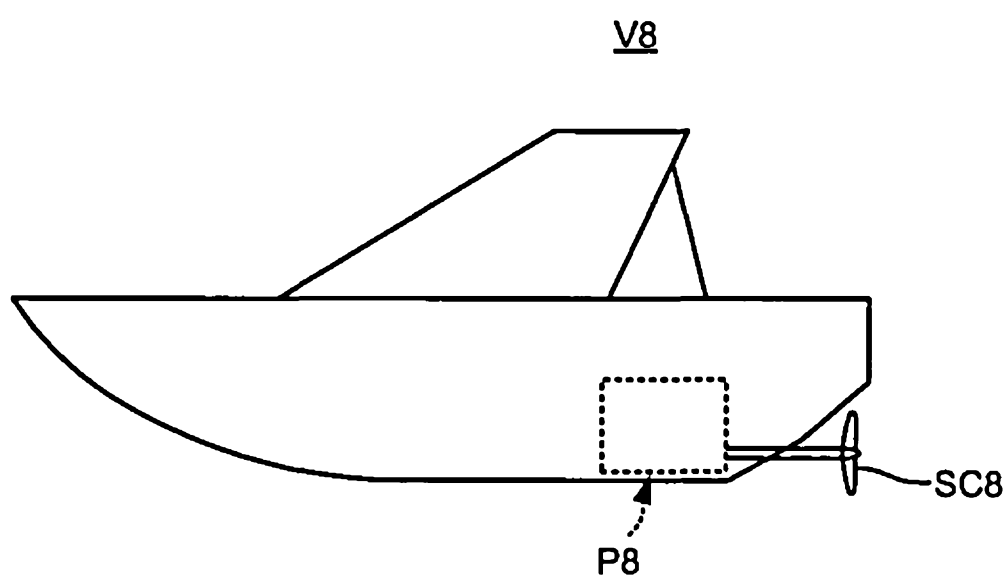


FIG.15

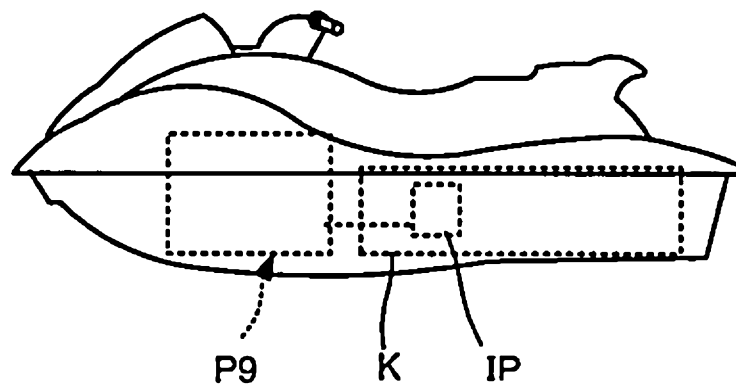
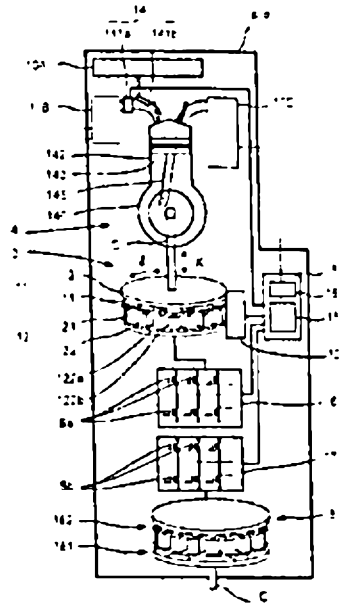
V9

Planche de l'abrégé



ABSTRACT

Provided are a drive system, etc. that can perform adjustments in accordance with demand for increases in torque while suppressing reductions in fuel efficiency. The drive system is provided with: an engine that has an engine output adjustment unit; a generator that has a supplied electric current
5 adjustment unit that changes the magnetic resistance of a magnetic circuit that passes through a stator core, and thereby changes the inductance of a winding and adjusts the electric current that is outputted from the generator; a motor that is directly or indirectly as well as removably connected to a rotational drive mechanism and that is configured so as to be driven by electric power that is
10 outputted from the generator and to output rotational power to the rotational drive mechanism; and a control unit that is configured so as to control, in accordance with torque demand on the drive system for torque that is outputted from the drive system to the rotational drive mechanism, both the engine output adjustment unit and the supplied electric current adjustment unit that adjusts
15 electric current by changing the inductance of the winding.