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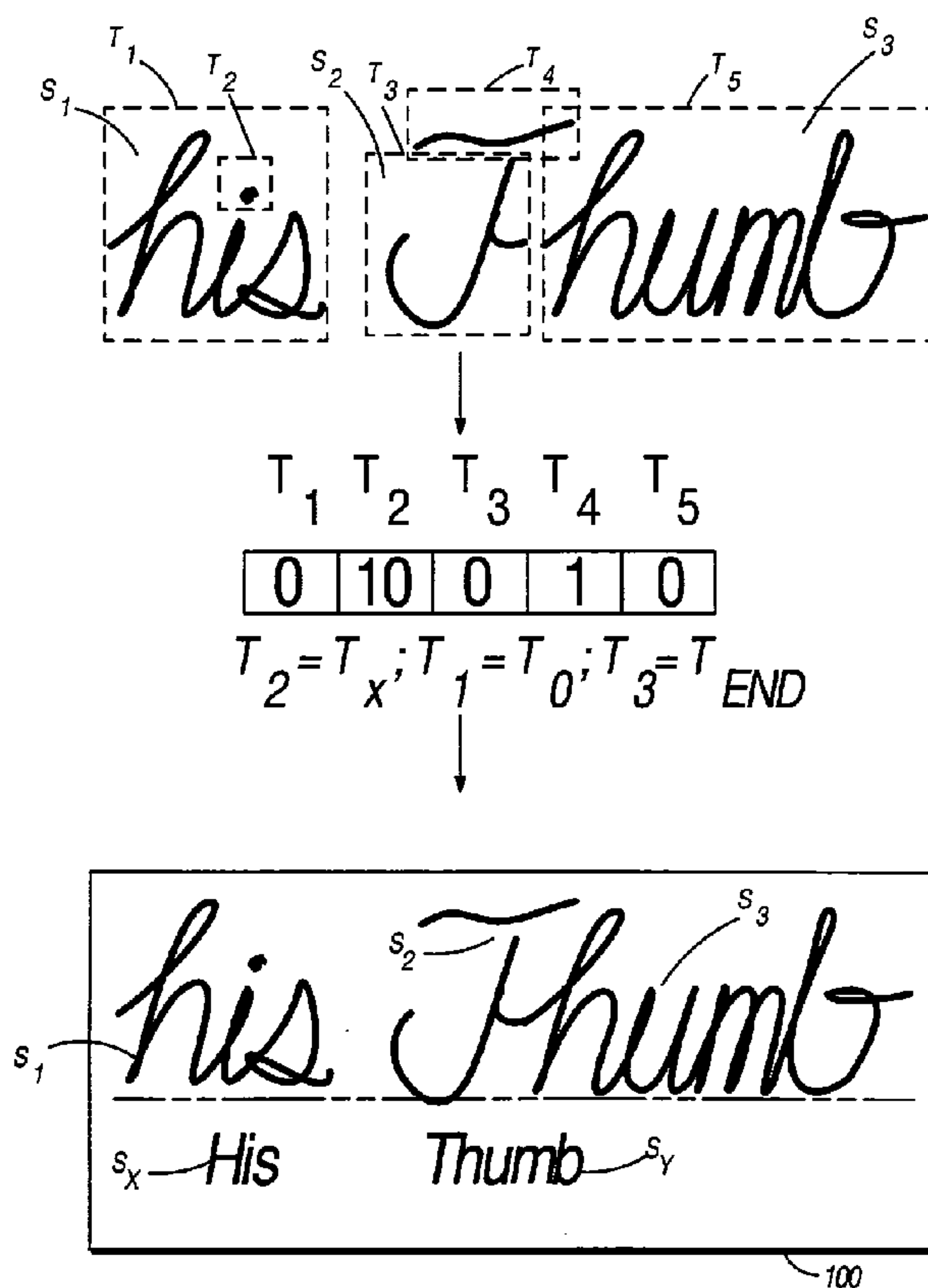
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(54) **PROCEDE PERMETTANT DE FRACTIONNER UNE ENTREE
MANUSCRITE**

(54) **METHOD OF SPLITTING HANDWRITTEN INPUT**



(57) La présente invention permet à un utilisateur d'éditer une entrée manuscrite (100) de sorte qu'il puisse choisir de fractionner au moins un segment continu, ou des blocs d'encre, afin de former au moins un segment discret continu (S_x et S_y). Les segments discrets fractionnés se présentent ensuite sous forme de segments discrets continus individuels. Ils sont analysés en tant que segments discrets individuels par un dispositif permettant de recevoir une entrée manuscrite (100) et fonctionnant selon un procédé de reconnaissance automatique d'entrée manuscrite.

(57) The present invention provides a user with the option of editing handwritten input (100) such that the user may elect to split one or more continuous segments, or blocks of ink, to form one or more discrete continuous segments (S_x and S_y). The split discrete segments are then presented as individual discrete continuous segments and analyzed as individual discrete segments by the method of machine recognition of handwritten input being employed by a device that functions to receive handwritten input (100).



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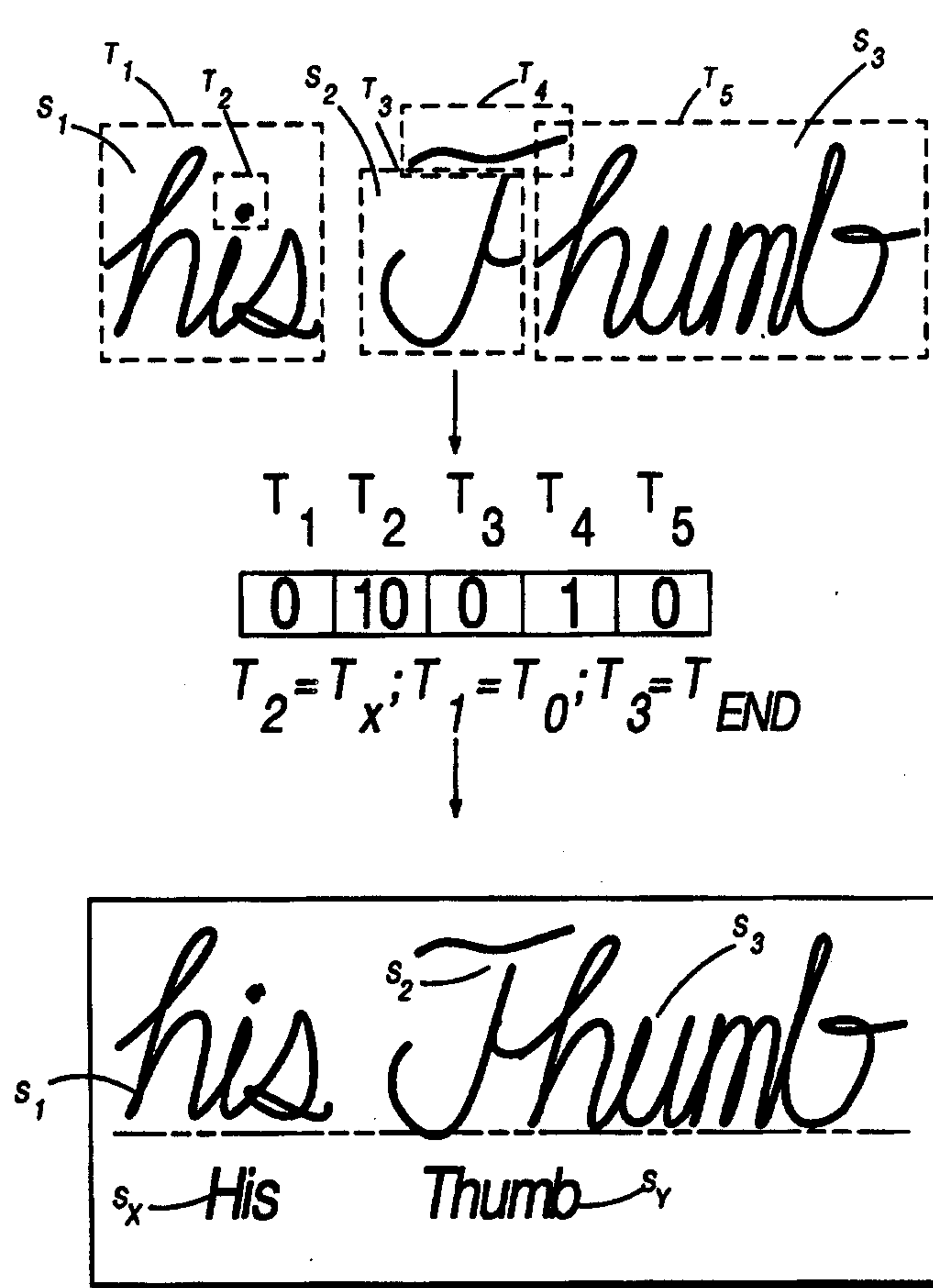
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(54) Title: METHOD OF SPLITTING HANDWRITTEN INPUT

(57) Abstract

The present invention provides a user with the option of editing handwritten input (100) such that the user may elect to split one or more continuous segments, or blocks of ink, to form one or more discrete continuous segments (S_x and S_y). The split discrete segments are then presented as individual discrete continuous segments and analyzed as individual discrete segments by the method of machine recognition of handwritten input being employed by a device that functions to receive handwritten input (100).



Method of Splitting Handwritten Input

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Field Of The Invention

This invention relates generally to handwriting
10 recognition, and more particularly to the selection input and editing
of discrete continuous segments of handwritten input.

Background of the Invention

15 Machine recognition of human handwriting is a very difficult
problem, and with the recent explosion of pen-based computing
devices, has become an important problem to be addressed.
Machine recognition of human handwriting has various present
applications.

20 One example of the current application for machine
recognition of human handwriting is found in personal digital
assistants, such as the Newton product and other types of pen based
computing devices. Typically these type of products have a touch
sensitive screen upon which a user can impose handwriting. These
25 devices then function to digitize the handwritten input, such as
alphanumeric input, and thereafter process the input in an attempt
to recognize the information content of the handwriting.

Pursuant to one prior art handwriting recognition technique,
one makes a best determination as to the identity of each
30 alphanumeric character in sequence, with the resulting string of
characters comprising the result of the recognition activity. There
are a variety of drawbacks to this approach. It is hindered by the
difficulty of identifying spatial boundaries of the candidate inputs (in
this case alphanumeric characters to be recognized. When these
35 boundaries are not located correctly, it is impossible to recognize the

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character accurately, since it will either be lacking pieces or will incorporate extraneous material from adjacent characters.

One significant problem with machine recognition of human handwriting is the ability to recognize the end of one input and the beginning of the next input. For example, a significant problem exists in locating the end of one handwritten input segment, word, or alphanumeric input, from the beginning of the subsequent handwritten input segment, word, or alphanumeric input. Poor recognition of the handwritten input results in poor, inaccurate interpretation of the information content of the handwritten input. This problem is accented by poor input practices of the user or input device, such as poor penmanship or handwriting habits. Machine recognition of handwritten input may incorrectly join one or more segments of handwritten input into one segment, and recognize them as them as a singular discrete segment. Alternatively, a user may feel the need to split one or more handwritten input segments after such segments have been entered as a singular discrete handwritten input segment.

Accordingly, a need exists for a handwriting recognition technique that allows a user or input device to enter a selection input edit instruction that permits the user, or input device, to split one or more continuous segments to form one or more discrete continuous segments for recognition and display and thereby provide a more accurate interpretation of the information content of the handwritten input.

Brief Description Of The Drawings

FIG. 1 Illustrates a flow diagram of operation in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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FIG. 3 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

5 FIG. 4 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

10 FIG. 5 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

15 FIG. 6 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

20 FIG. 7 Illustrates a graphical view of an illustrative display in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description Of The Preferred Embodiments

25 Generally, the present invention as disclosed provides a user with the option of editing handwritten input such that the user may elect to split one or more continuous segments, or blocks of ink, to form one or more discrete continuous segments. The split discrete segments are then presented as individual discrete continuous segments and analyzed as individual discrete segments by the
30 method of machine recognition of handwritten input being employed by a device that functions to receive handwritten input, such as a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). The recognition of the individual discrete segments that result is then displayed to the user.

35 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the handwritten input is alphanumeric, the writing axis is horizontal, and the writing direction is left to right. In accordance with this

preferred embodiment, the handwritten input and the resultant recognition are displayed concurrently and in close juxtaposition to each other. This close juxtaposition allows the user to refer to their original handwritten input when correcting errors in the processing and recognition of the handwritten input.

Typically, handwritten character input is collected from the user in the form of discrete continuous segments. A discrete continuous segment consists of one or more pen strokes, where a pen stroke is the mark left by a pen during its period of contact with an input device such as a digitizing tablet or paper. A stroke is represented as a sequence of points sampled at approximately regular intervals by the input device. Each point is described at minimum by an X coordinate and a Y coordinate. Strokes may be captured electronically using a digitizing tablet, or in alternative embodiments may be derived from a scanned or faxed image through a process of line detection in the image; such methods of capturing input electronically are understood in the art.

In the present invention one or more discrete continuous segments are the units of handwritten input being recognized. Handwritten input is input which is captured electronically that includes but is not limited to the following: handwritten input; electronic input; input captured through pressure, such as stamped input; input that is received electronically, such as via facsimile, pager, or other device. For purposes of explanation of the present invention, handwritten input is typically presented along a writing axis in a direction which is defined as the writing direction. The writing axis is the line along which the handwritten input is added. The writing direction is the direction in which each subsequent handwritten input is added. For example, in English, handwritten input is added typically along a horizontal writing axis with each subsequent alphanumeric input following horizontally after the previous input in a writing direction that is left to right. Various other writing axis and writing direction alternatives are possible with the implementation of the teachings of the present invention.

In a preferred embodiment, the handwriting axis is horizontal and the handwritten input forms a series of words. In this

preferred embodiment, the continuous discrete segments are entered horizontally from left to right. In an alternative preferred embodiment, the handwriting axis is horizontal and the handwritten input forms a series of separate characters, which may be

5 alphanumeric characters, ideographic characters as found in languages such as Chinese, or other forms of characters or symbols of written communications. In this alternative embodiment, the output tells whether the discrete continuous segments belong to separate characters. In another preferred embodiment, the handwriting axis

10 is vertical and the handwritten input forms a series of separate characters, which may be alphanumeric characters, ideographic characters, or other handwritten input. In this preferred embodiment, the writing axis is vertical and the output tells whether the discrete continuous segments belong to separate characters. In

15 another preferred embodiment, the handwriting axis is vertical and the handwritten input forms a series of separate words, alphanumeric input, or other handwritten input, such as a vertical list of words, or numbers. In this preferred embodiment, the writing axis is vertical and the output tells whether the discrete continuous

20 segments belong to separate handwritten input, such as separate words.

As disclosed above and as will be discussed further, the present invention demonstrates through the disclosure of several of the preferred embodiments that the writing axis may exist at any

25 angle and the handwritten input may be interpreted more generally as corresponding to discrete elements (including but not limited to characters and words) containing one or more discrete continuous segments. The application of the methods described herein to any of various preferred embodiments requires only a change in the

30 coordinate system used and such modifications can be made in accordance with the teachings presented.

Referring now to the Figures, a personal digital assistant (PDA) is generally depicted by reference numeral 100. The PDA 100 depicted constitutes a generic representation and may be comprised

35 for example of a Newton™ or other pen based computing device. Such devices typically include a housing and a touch screen upon

which input, such as words, can be handwritten using an appropriate hand manipulated stylus, or other input device. Such PDA and pen based computing devices typically include one or more microprocessors or other digital processing devices. These devices
5 comprise computational platforms that can be readily programmed in accordance with the teachings presented herein. It should be understood that, while such personal digital assistants and pen based computing devices comprise a ready platform to accommodate the practice of applicant's teachings, the teachings presented herein may
10 be practiced in a variety of other operating environments as well. Some examples of such environments include computers with digitizing screens, or which are connected to a digitizing input surface, or capable of receiving faxed or scanned image input, or digital or interactive televisions, modems, pagers, or other systems
15 with the ability to capture handwritten input and process it.

Referring now to FIG 1, a preferred method of the present invention is illustrated. The present invention is applicable to one or more handwritten inputs of continuous segments. The preferred
20 embodiments of the present invention are applicable to handwritten inputs having two or more strokes in a continuous segment. The use of three continuous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ of alphanumeric input are for illustrative purposes only. For illustrative purposes S₁, S₂, and S₃ represent S_n, S_{n+1}, and S_{n+2} respectively. In the preferred method illustrated in FIGs 1 through 7, handwritten input consisting
25 of one or more continuous segments is received by an input device 110, such as a personal digital assistant 100, or other device capable of capturing handwritten input. The handwritten input is analyzed by the handwriting recognition method executing on the input device, to provide recognition 115, in this embodiment alphanumeric, that
30 represents the corresponding handwritten input. In accordance with this preferred embodiment, the recognition of the continuous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ is displayed to the user 120. Preferably, the recognition of S₁, S₂, and S₃ is displayed in close juxtaposition to a digitized representation of the original handwritten input of S₁, S₂,
35 and S₃. Once the recognition is displayed 120, the user may select to input, or edit, 125 the displayed recognition 120 of S₁, S₂, and S₃. If

the user, or input device, does not enter a selection input a
recognition is displayed 130 for the one or more continuous segments
S₁, S₂, and S₃ of handwritten input. If, however, the selection input
is a split command, or instruction, then the continuous segments S₁,
5 S₂, and S₃ are analyzed according to the strokes in each segment
and are split into one or more discrete segments dependent if the
stroke analysis indicates a gap exists among or between the
continuous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃. Preferably, upon the receipt of
a split instruction the contiguous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ are parsed
10 according to the strokes T in each segment S₁, S₂, and S₃ (see Figs. 2-
7). Preferably the strokes are enumerated in temporal order, i.e. the
order in which the user enters them; or input device receives them.
This order is not necessarily the order that they appear along the
writing axis. For example if the writing axis is left to right, a stroke
15 T_n which is written first may appear after a stroke T_{n+1}. For
example the upward stroke of the cursive letter "i" may be stroke T_n,
but the stroke of the "dot" of the "i", which is T_{n+1} may appear on a
the writing axis before the stroke T_n.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, once the
20 continuous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ are parsed into their respective
strokes, a map of the smallest gap that exist between each stroke and
all other strokes of the continuous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ is
generated 135 and recorded. For each stroke, a value is recorded on
the map. The value that is recorded is the largest of the values found
25 of smallest gaps for that stroke as compared to every other stroke of
the segments S₁, S₂, and S₃. As illustrated in FIG 1, 140, the value Z
is recorded because it is the largest value found of those values
corresponding to the smallest gaps that exist between a particular
stroke T_n and all other strokes T_{n+/-1 . . .}, of the continuous
30 segments S₁, S₂, and S₃. Graphic illustrations of the value of Z are
shown in FIGs 2 - 7. If the value of Z for each stroke is less than zero
the contiguous segments S₁, S₂, and S₃ are concluded to be a single
continuous handwritten input and is displayed to the user, or input
device, as such 130. However, if the value of Z, for any stroke T, is
35 greater than zero, the one or more continuous segments S₁, S₂, and
S₃, are split at the stroke number T_x having the largest value Z 150;

where T_x is defined as the split stroke number. If a split stroke number is found, at least one discrete segment S_x is generated 155, where S_x includes the discrete continuous segments from stroke $T =$ Zero to the split stroke number T_x . At least a second discrete
5 segment S_y is generated 160, where S_y includes the discrete continuous segments from split stroke number plus one, T_{x+1} , to the last stroke T_{end} of the continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 . In accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the discrete continuous segments S_x and S_y are each analyzed and
10 recognized as separate, distinct handwritten inputs by the handwriting recognition method executing on the input device 165. The teaching of the present invention may be employed by a variety of handwriting recognition methods. The recognition for both S_x and S_y is displayed to the user or input device 170. Preferably, the
15 recognition of S_x and S_y is displayed in close juxtaposition to a digitized representation of the original handwritten input of continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 , or a to a digitized representation of the handwritten input divided according to the discrete segments S_x and S_y . Once the recognition of S_x and S_y is displayed 170, the
20 user, or input device, may repeat a selection input split instruction and may select to split the discrete segments S_x and S_y , if possible. In accordance with the preferred method of the present invention a user may continue with one or more selection input instructions until the user no longer selects a split instruction or there are no discrete
25 continuous segments remaining to split.

Referring now to FIGs 2 through 7, a graphical representation of a preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. FIGs 2 through 4, illustrate an input device 110 upon which is received the handwritten input consisting of continuous
30 segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 . The continuous segments are recognized as a single continuous segment S_a and are displayed to the user or input device as such. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention as selection input is requested by the user, or input device. The selection input 125 is a split instruction, as
35 illustrated in FIG. 3 and 4. FIG 4 illustrates the recognition and display of the discrete continuous segments S_x and S_y after the continuous

segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 were parsed into strokes and processed according to a preferred method substantially similar to the method illustrated in FIG 1. The advantage of the present invention allows a user, or input device to join split an infinite amount of continuous segments S_n , $S_{n+/-1}$, $S_{n+/-2}$, etc., either repeatedly or simultaneously, to form separate individual discrete segments S_x , S_y , etc. This provides a user, or input device, a variety of editing capabilities.

FIGs. 5 through 7, illustrate a preferred method substantially similar to the method illustrated in FIG 1, as steps 125 through 188. In this preferred embodiment, the continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 are parsed into strokes T_0 through T_{end} . A map of the smallest gaps between each stroke and all other strokes of the continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 , is generated. In this map the largest value, Z , 125, is recorded for each stroke, where Z is equal to the largest value found for each stroke, from the list of values of the smallest gaps found between that stroke and all other strokes. If map generated indicates Z is less than or equal to zero the continuous segment is found to be a single discrete handwritten input. This is illustrated in FIG 5, the continuous segment S_1 is deemed to be a single discrete handwritten input, in this example a single word that should not be split.

As illustrated in FIG 6 - 7, if however the value of Z is greater than zero for any of the strokes T , the one or more continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 , are split at the stroke number T_x having the largest value Z 150; where T_x is defined as the split stroke number. If a split stroke number is found, at least one discrete segment S_x is generated 155, where S_x includes the discrete continuous segments from stroke $T = \text{Zero}$ to the split stroke number T_x . At least a second discrete segment S_y is generated 160, where S_y includes the discrete continuous segments from split stroke number plus one, T_{x+1} , to the last stroke T_{end} of the continuous segments S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 . In accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the discrete continuous segments S_x and S_y are each analyzed and recognized as separate, distinct handwritten inputs by the handwriting recognition method executing on the input

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device 165. The recognition for both S_x and S_y is displayed to the user or input device 170.

5 It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the disclosed invention may be modified in numerous ways and may assume many embodiments other than the preferred forms particularly set out and described above. Accordingly, it is intended by the appended claims to cover all modifications of the invention that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention and its
10 equivalents.

THE EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A method comprising the steps of:
 - processing electronic data comprising a series of data points that correspond to an original handwritten input of continuous segments to provide recognized characters that correspond to the original handwritten input;
 - displaying the recognized words;
 - upon receiving a split instruction, parsing the series of data points into a series of strokes from a given stroke and each subsequently written stroke, generating a first set of gap values for the given stroke of the gap or gaps between the given stroke as compared to each subsequently written stroke,
 - continuing generating further first sets of one or more gap values of the gap or gaps between each stroke as compared to every other subsequently written stroke:
 - from the first sets of gap values so generated, generating a second set of smallest gap values comprising a smallest of the gap values for each stroke;
 - splitting the one or more continuous segments at a split stroke number T_x , said split stroke number having a largest value of the second set of smallest gap values;
 - generating at least a first discrete continuous segment incorporating each of the series of strokes from a start stroke T_0 to the split stroke number T_x ;
 - generating at least a second discrete continuous segment incorporating each of the series of strokes from a stroke immediately following the split stroke number T_x to a final stroke; and
 - displaying recognized words that correspond to the first and second discrete continuous segments.
2. A method comprising the steps of:
 - processing data representing handwritten input having one or more continuous segments and displaying recognized characters representing said handwritten input;
 - parsing, upon command, the segments into a series of strokes:

from a given stroke and each subsequently written stroke, generating a first set of gap values for the given stroke of the gap or gaps between the given stroke as compared to each subsequently written stroke;

generating further first sets of one or more gap values for further strokes;

generating, from the first sets of gap values a smallest gap value for each stroke to provide a second set of smallest gap values comprising a smallest of the gap values for each stroke of the series of strokes;

splitting the one or more continuous segments between a stroke T_x and an immediate following stroke T_{x+1} having a largest value of the second set of smallest gap values therebetween, to provide first and second discrete continuous segments; and

displaying recognized characters that represent the first and second discrete continuous segments.

3. A method, comprising the steps of:

processing data representing one or more continuous segments of handwritten input and displaying recognized characters associated therewith;

parsing, upon command, the segments into a series of strokes; comparing a gap value for a size of a gap from each stroke to each remaining stroke in the series of strokes to provide, for each stroke, a first set of gap values;

from first sets of gap values so provided, identifying a smallest gap value for each stroke, thereby providing a second set of smallest gap values;

identifying a largest gap value of the second set of smallest gap values of the series of strokes;

splitting the one or more continuous segments at the largest gap value to provide first and second discrete continuous segments; and

displaying recognized characters associated with the first and second discrete continuous segments.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the processing step further comprises:

generating the data from the one or more continuous segments of handwritten input entered by a user along a writing axis in a writing direction; and

processing the data for displaying the recognized characters associated therewith.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the processing step further comprises:
generating the data from the one or more continuous segments of
handwritten input entered by a user along an a horizontal writing axis in a left-to-right
writing direction; and
processing the data for displaying the recognized words or characters
associated therewith.
6. The method of claim 3, wherein the processing step further comprises:
generating the data from the one or more continuous segments of
handwritten input entered by a user along an a vertical writing axis in a
predetermined writing direction; and
processing the data for displaying the recognized words or characters
associated therewith.
7. The method of claim 3, wherein the processing step further comprises
processing the data representing the one or more continuous segments of
handwritten input and displaying the recognized characters associated therewith in
juxtaposition to the handwritten input.
8. The method of claim 3, wherein the displaying step further comprises
displaying the recognized characters associated with the first and second discrete
continuous segments in juxtaposition to the handwritten input.
9. The method of claim 3, wherein the parsing step further comprises parsing,
upon command, the segments into a series of enumerated strokes enumerated in
entered or received order, and generating a smallest gap value for each enumerated
stroke as compared to each remaining enumerated strokes in the series of
enumerated strokes to provide the largest value from the set of smallest gap values
between the series of enumerated strokes.
10. The method of claim 3, wherein the splitting step further comprises splitting
the one or more continuous segments at the largest value of the smallest gap values
to provide the first and second discrete continuous segments when the largest gap
value is greater than zero.

11. The method of claim 3, wherein the splitting step further comprises determining that the one or more continuous segments cannot be split when the largest value of the smallest gap values is less than or equal to zero.
12. A device, comprising:
 - digital processing circuitry capable of processing data representing one or more continuous segments of handwritten input and capable of parsing, upon command, the segments into a series of strokes and comparing a gap value for each stroke to each subsequent stroke in the series of strokes for generating a first set of gap values for each stroke, for identifying a smallest gap value for each stroke from the first set of gap values for each stroke, thereby providing a second set of smallest gap values for the series of strokes and for splitting the one or more continuous segments at a largest value of the second set of smallest gap values of the series of strokes to provide first and second discrete continuous segments; and
 - a display for displaying recognized characters associated with the handwritten input and the first and second discrete continuous segments.
13. The device of claim 12, which includes a hand manipulates stylus facilitating user entry of the handwritten input.
14. The device of claim 12, which includes a digitizing screen for the display or digitizing tablet upon which a user can enter the handwritten input.
15. The device of claim 14, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to generate the data from the one or more continuous segments of handwritten input entered by a user along an a writing axis in a predetermined writing direction on the digitizing screen for the display or the digitizing tablet.
16. The device of claim 14, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to generate the data from the one or more continuous segments of handwritten input entered by a user along an a horizontal writing axis in a left-to-right writing direction on the digitizing screen for the display or the digitizing tablet.
17. The device of claim 14, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to generate the data from the one or more continuous segments of

handwritten input entered by a user along an a vertical writing axis in a predetermined writing direction on the digitizing screen for the display or the digitizing tablet.

18. The device of claim 12, wherein the digital processing circuitry and the display operate to display the recognized words or characters associated therewith in juxtaposition to the handwritten input.

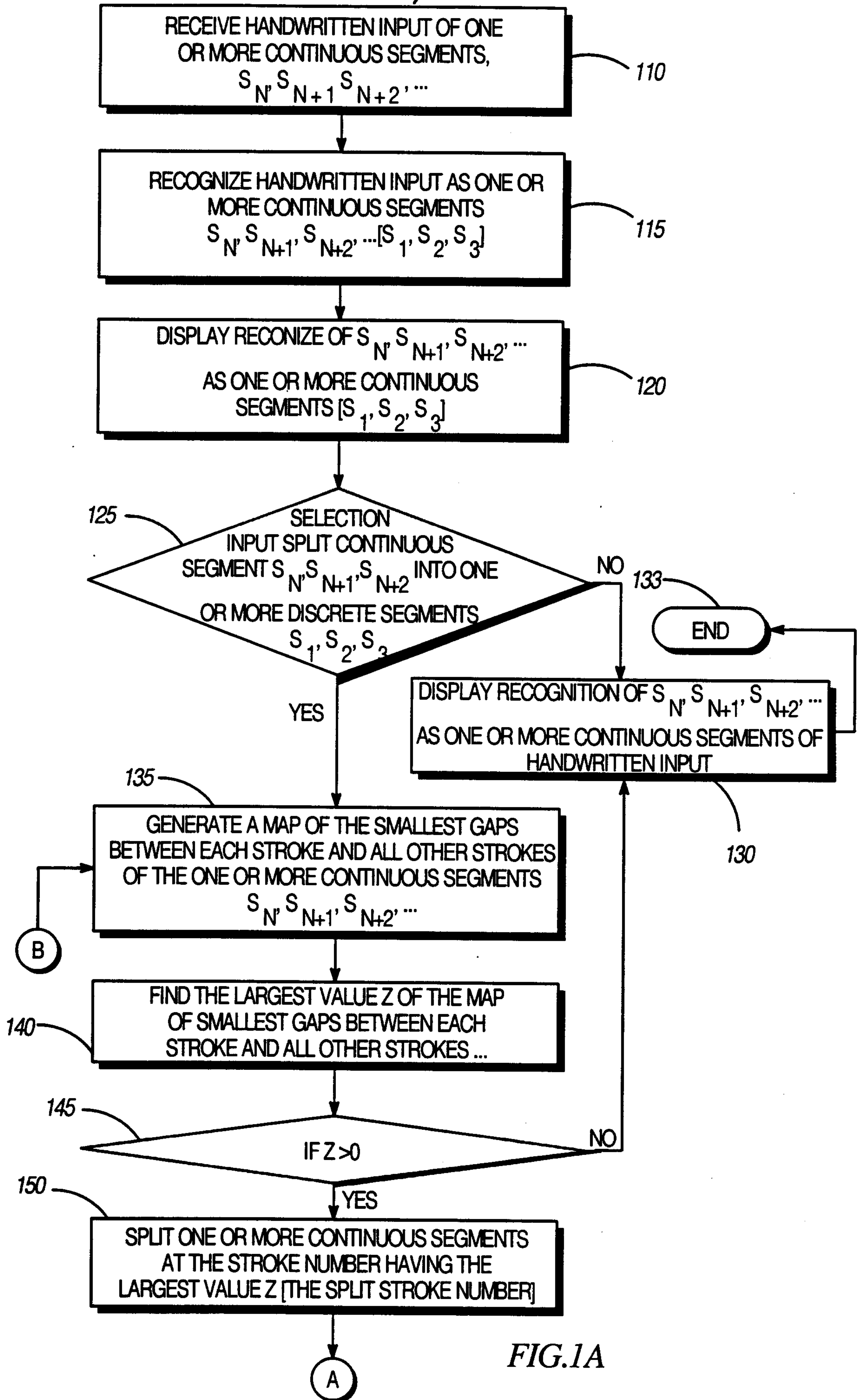
19. The device of claim 12, wherein the digital processing circuitry and the display operate to display the recognized words or characters associated with the first and second discrete continuous segments in juxtaposition to the handwritten input.

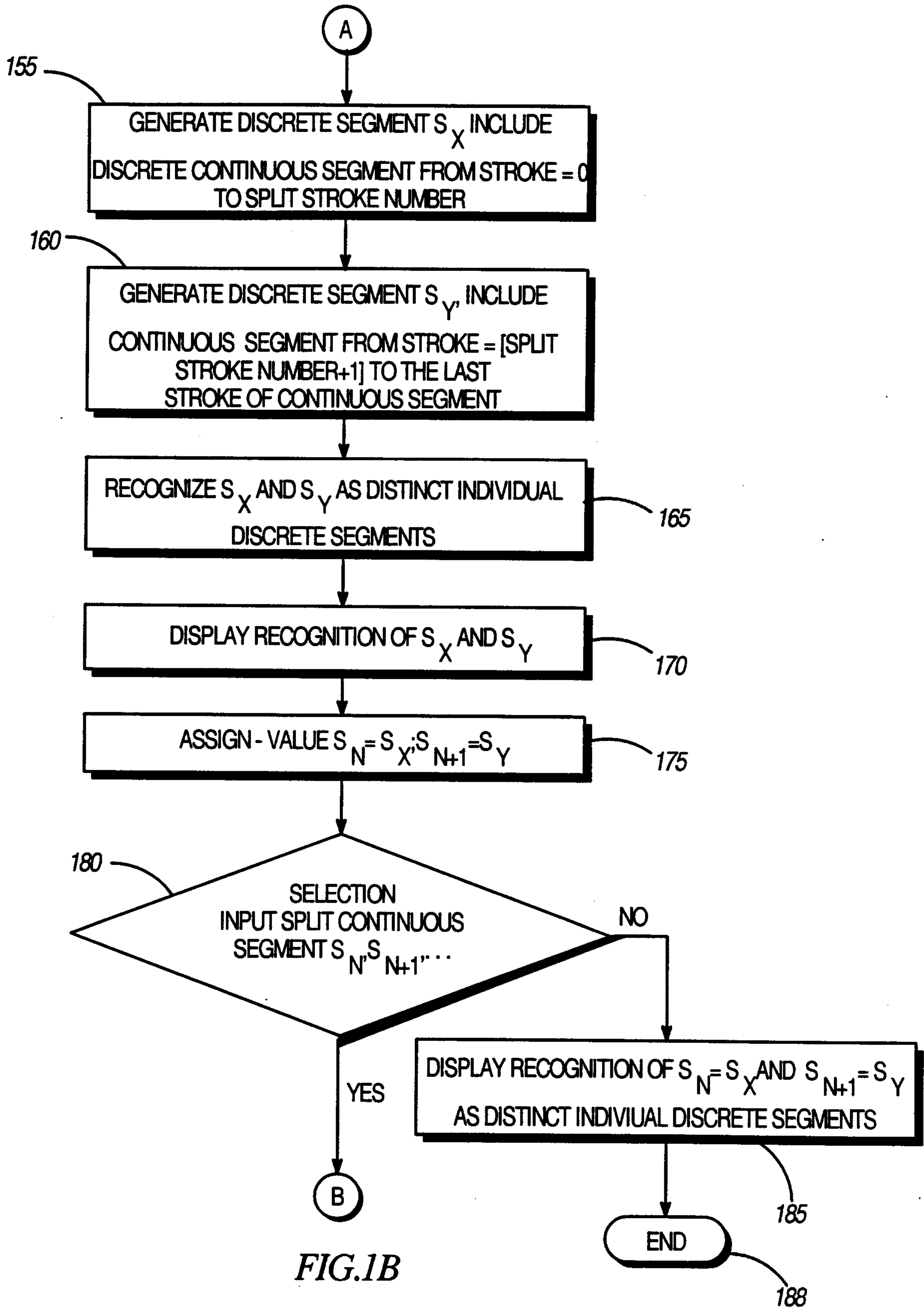
20. The device of claim 12, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to parse, upon command, the segments into a series of enumerated strokes enumerated in entered or received order, and comparing the gap value for each enumerated stroke to the remaining enumerated strokes in the series of enumerated strokes to provide the largest value from the second set of smallest gap values between the series of enumerated strokes.

21. The device of claim 12, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to split the one or more continuous segments at the largest gap value to provide the first and second discrete continuous segments when the largest gap value is greater than zero.

22. The device of claim 12, wherein the digital processing circuitry is programmed to determine that the one or more continuous segments cannot be split when the largest gap value is less than or equal to zero.

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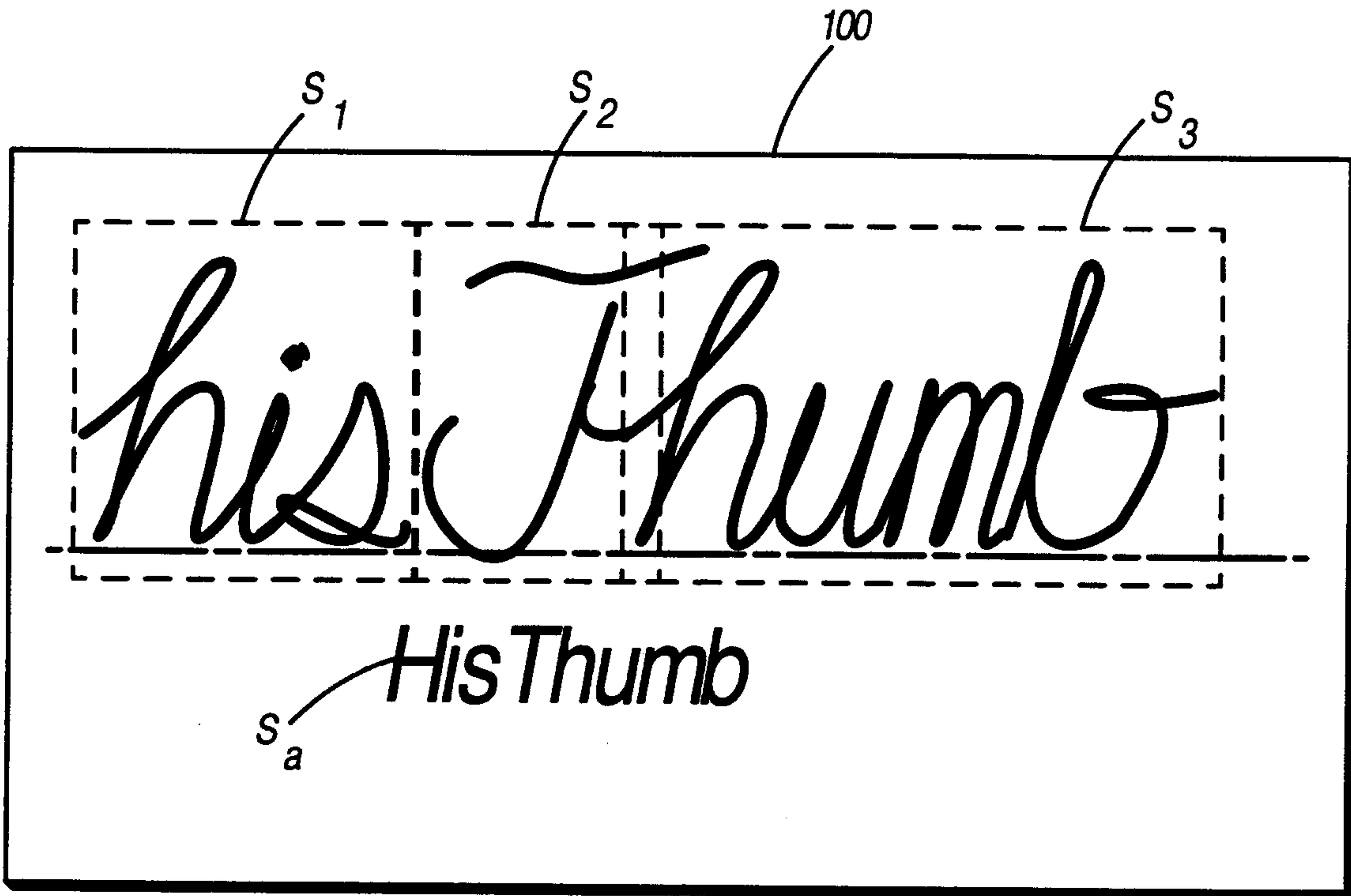


FIG. 2

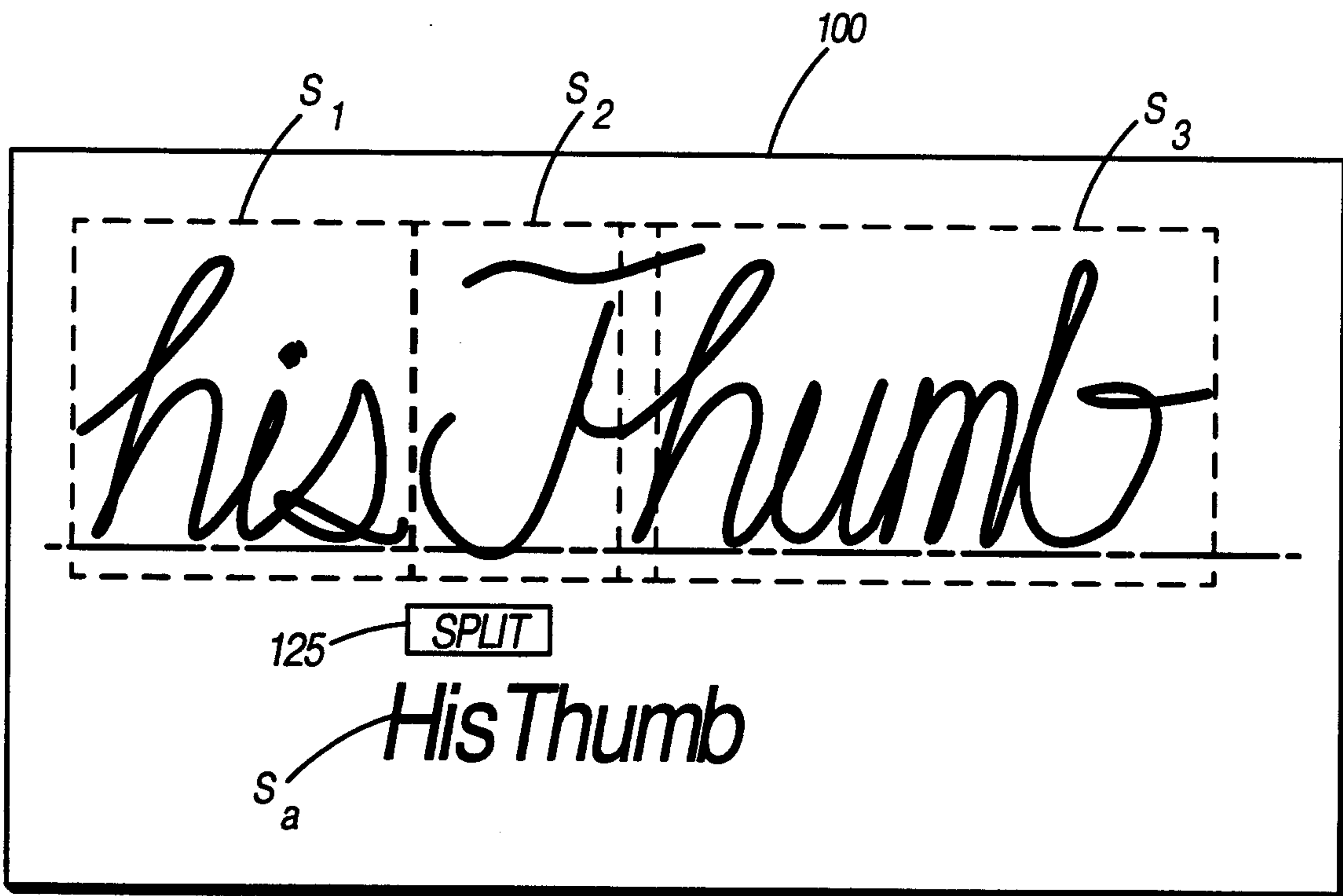


FIG. 3

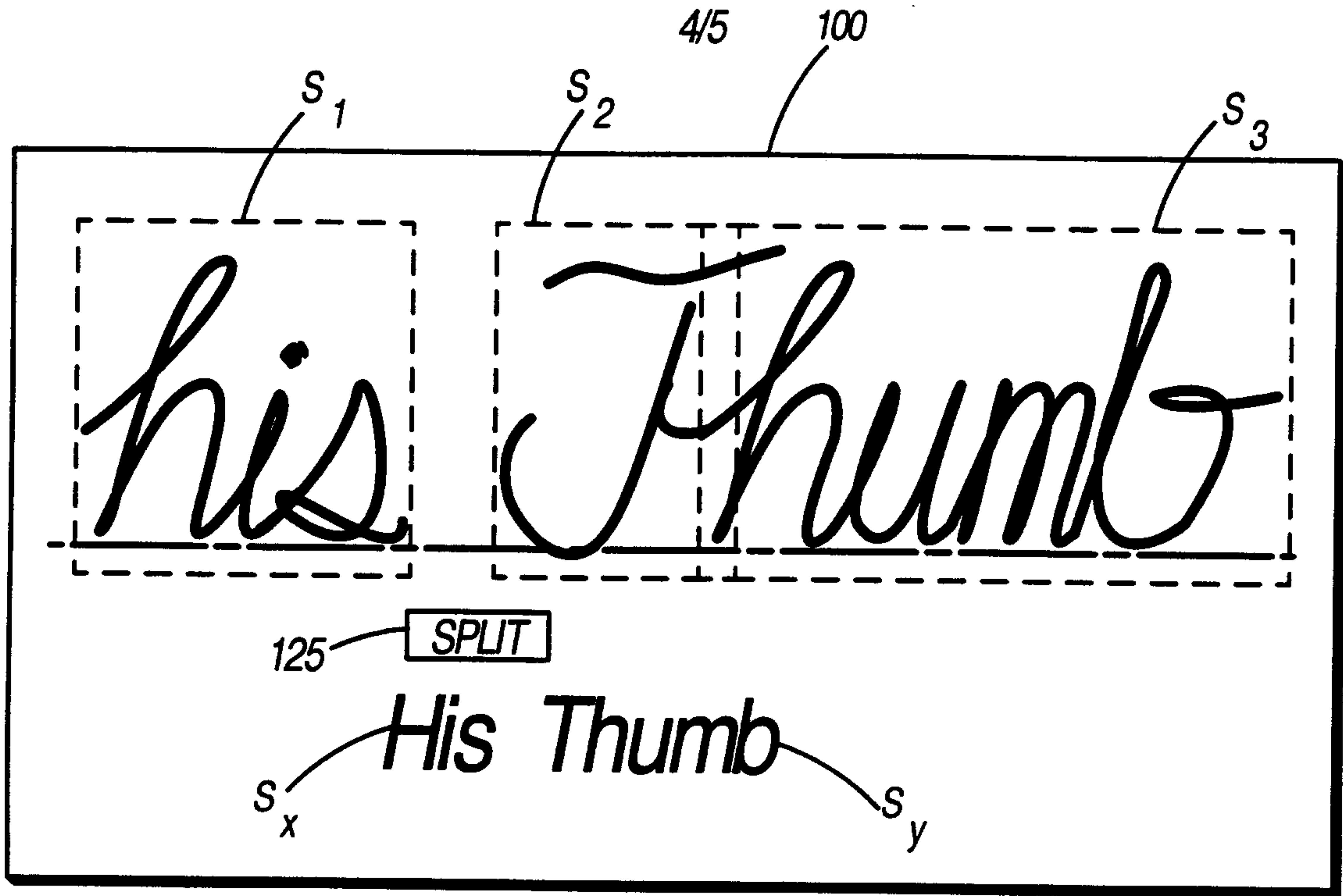


FIG. 4

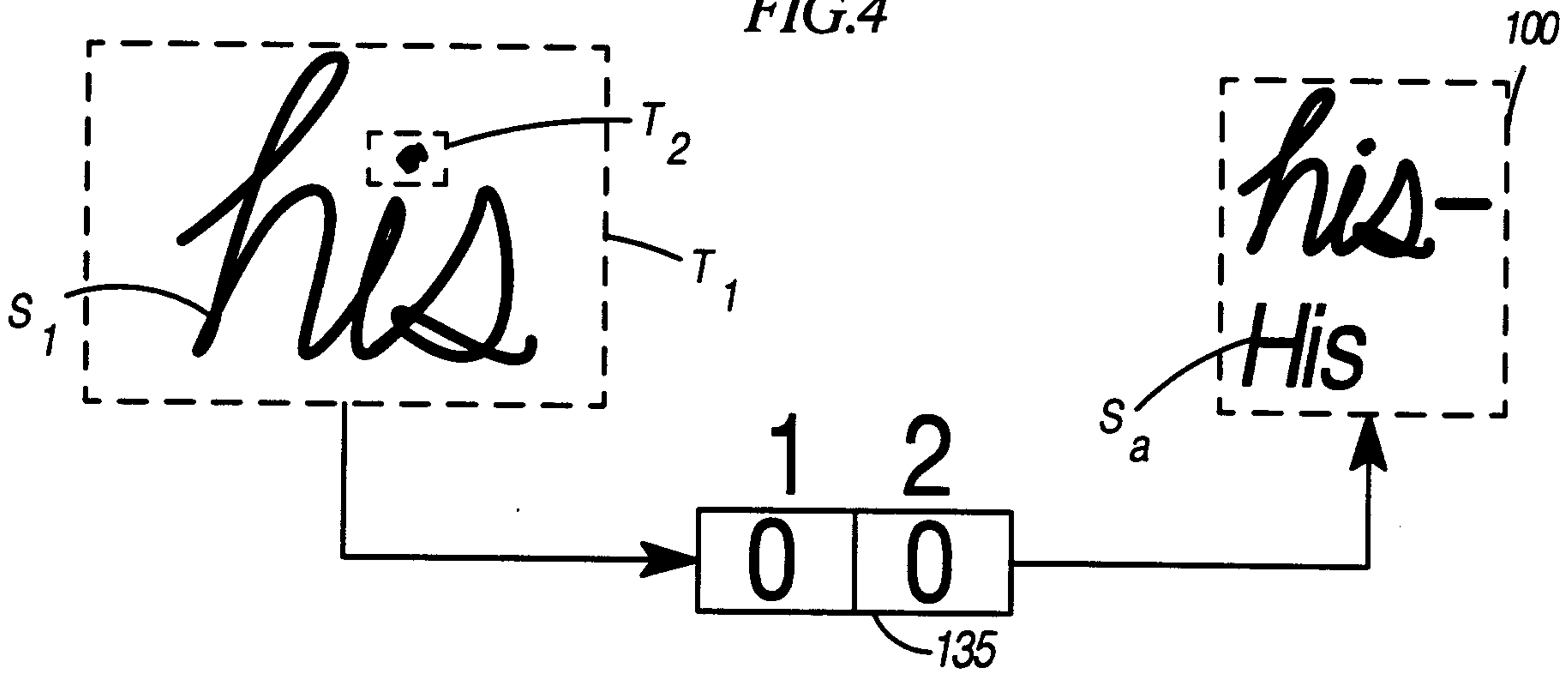


FIG. 5

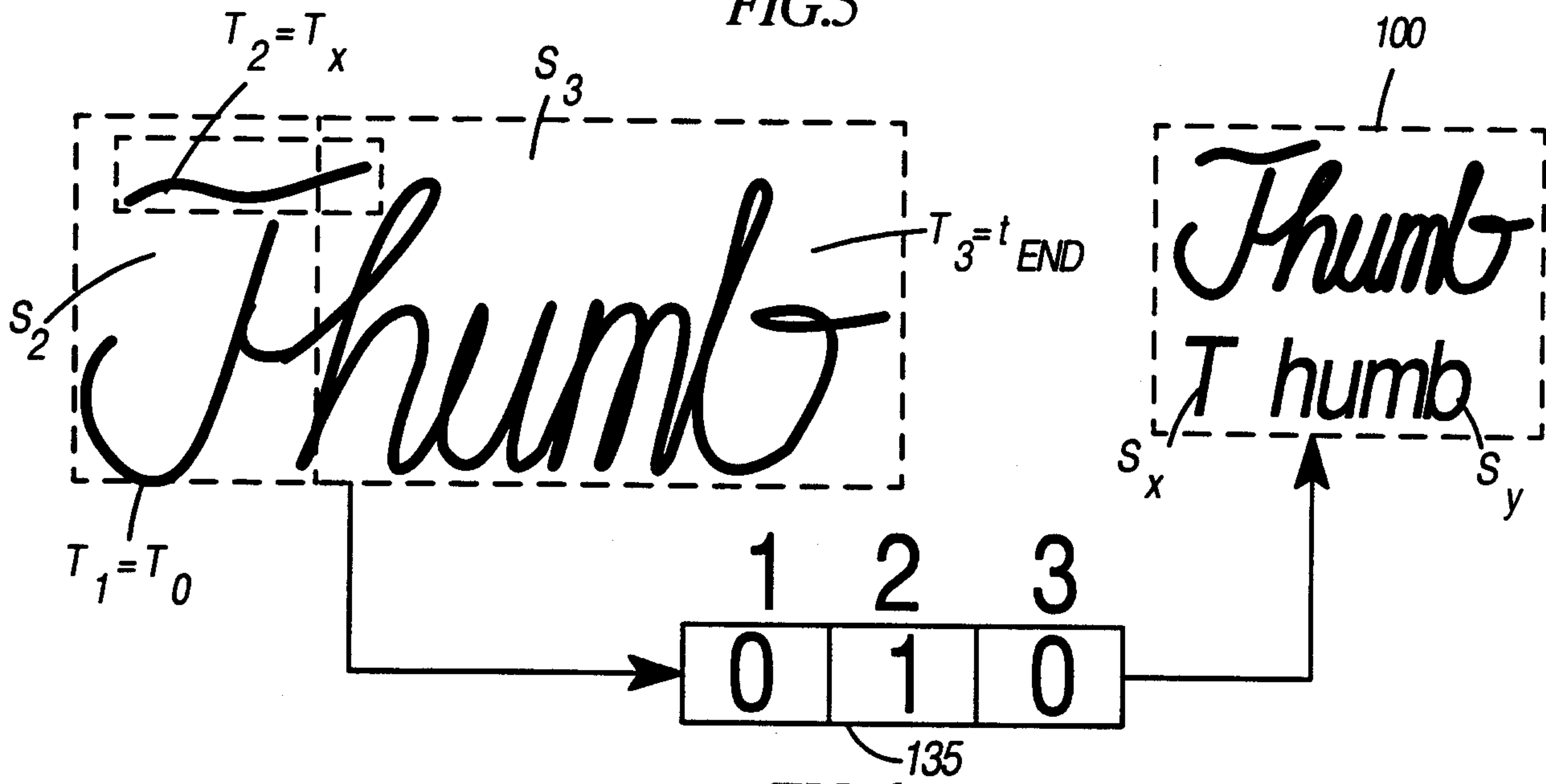


FIG. 6

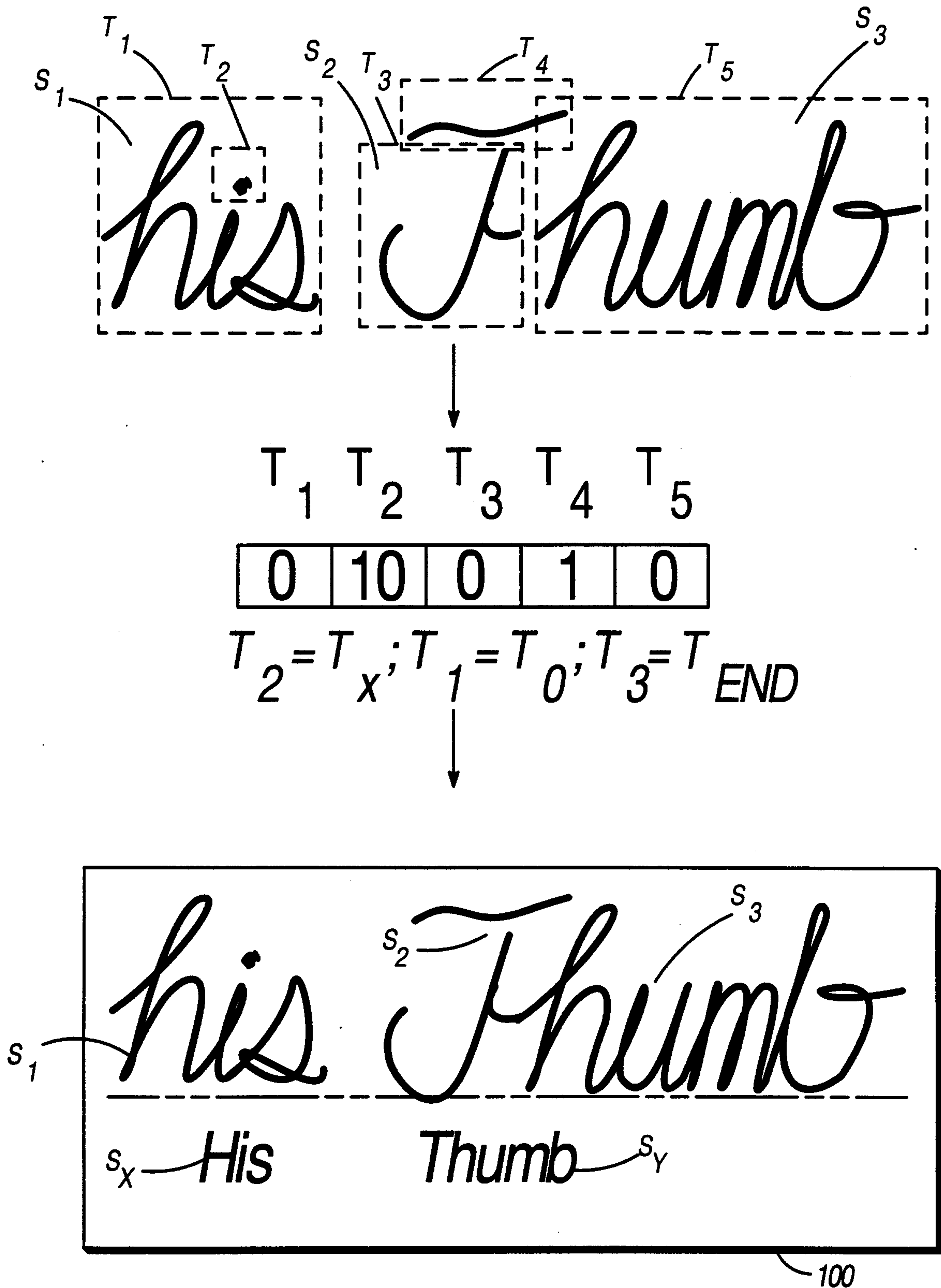


FIG.7