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(54) **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR DETECTING FOREIGN OBJECT IN WIRELESS POWER TRANSMITTING SYSTEM**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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The present disclosure provides an apparatus and method for detecting a foreign object in a wireless power transmitting system. The wireless power transmitting apparatus measures an initial transmission power transmitted from the primary core block and performs foreign object detection on the basis of the initial transmission power, once it is found that an initial voltage of an output terminal of the wireless power receiving apparatus connected to an external load is within the range of a reference voltage. By performing foreign object detection while a wireless power receiving apparatus is in an initial setting completion state, before the output of the wireless power receiving apparatus is turned on, delay in detecting foreign objects may be reduced, and a risk due to heating of a foreign object may be avoided.

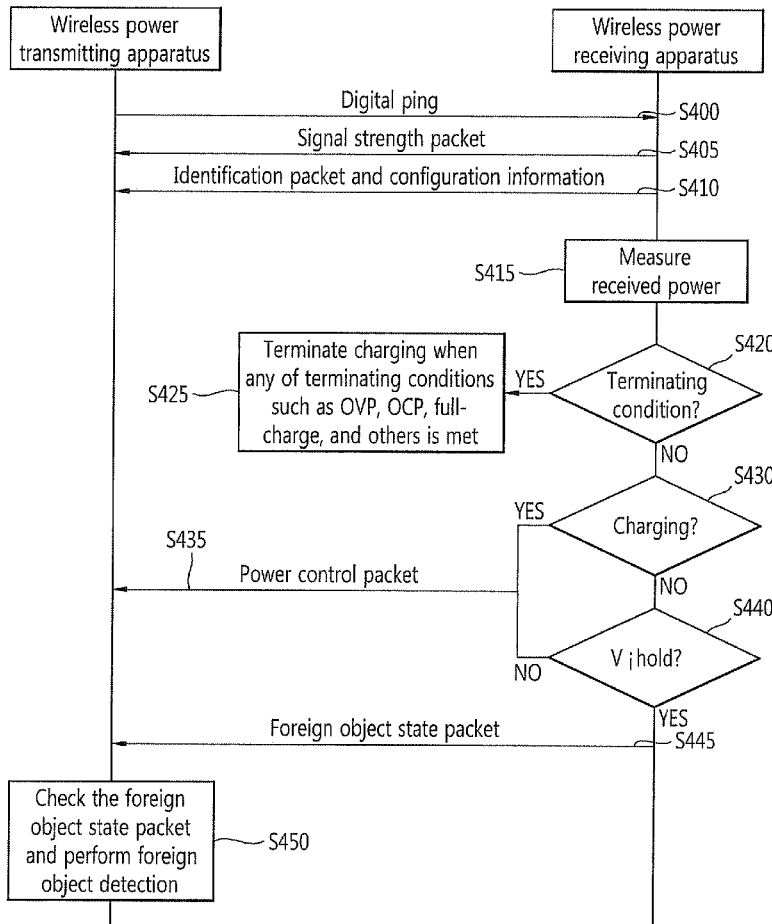


FIG. 1

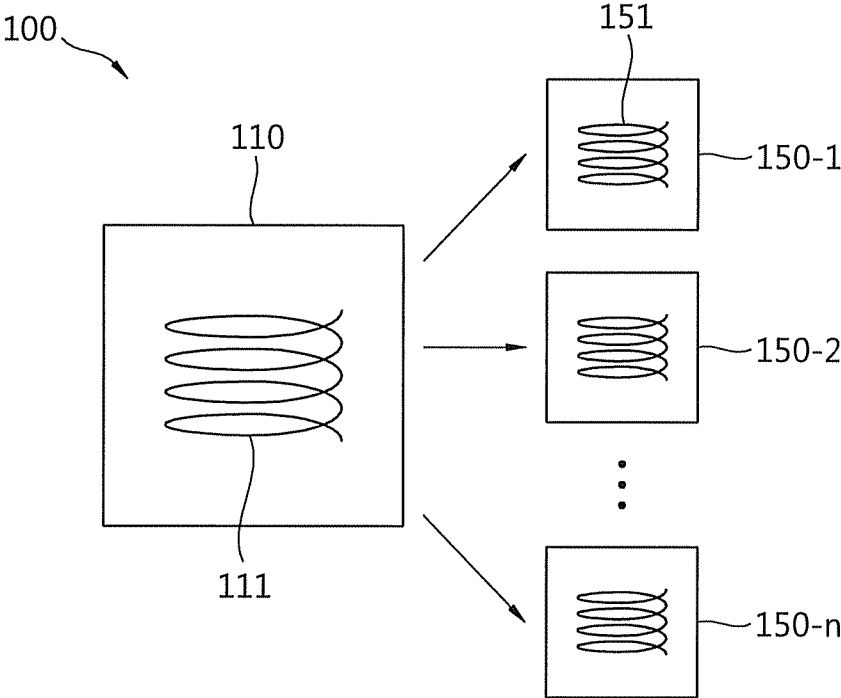


FIG. 2

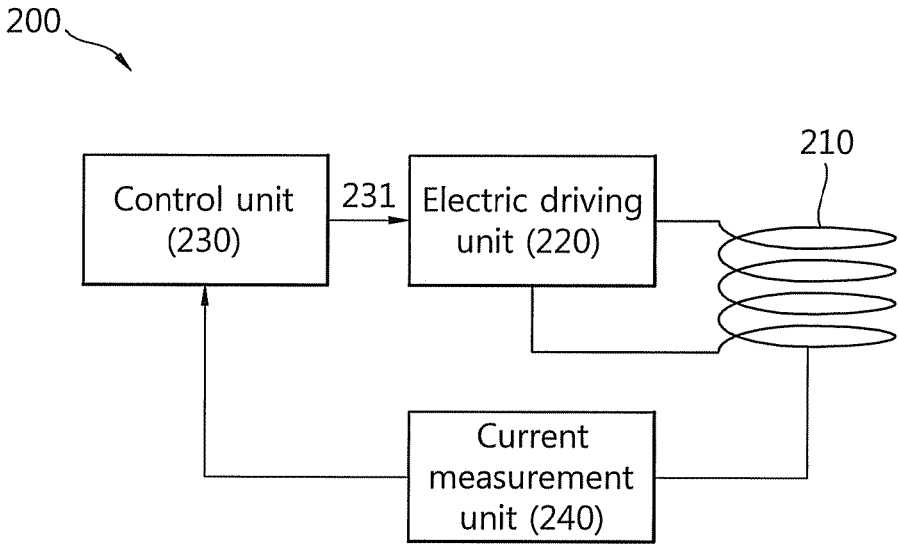


FIG. 3

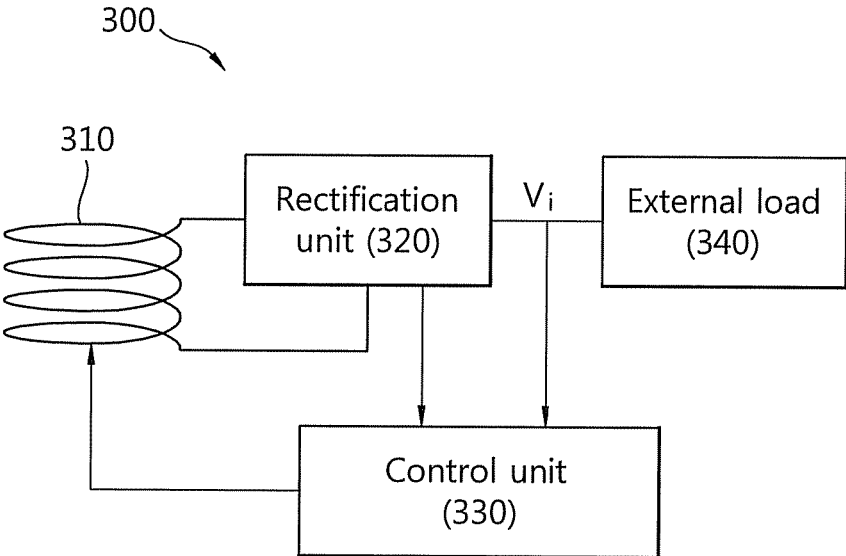


FIG. 4

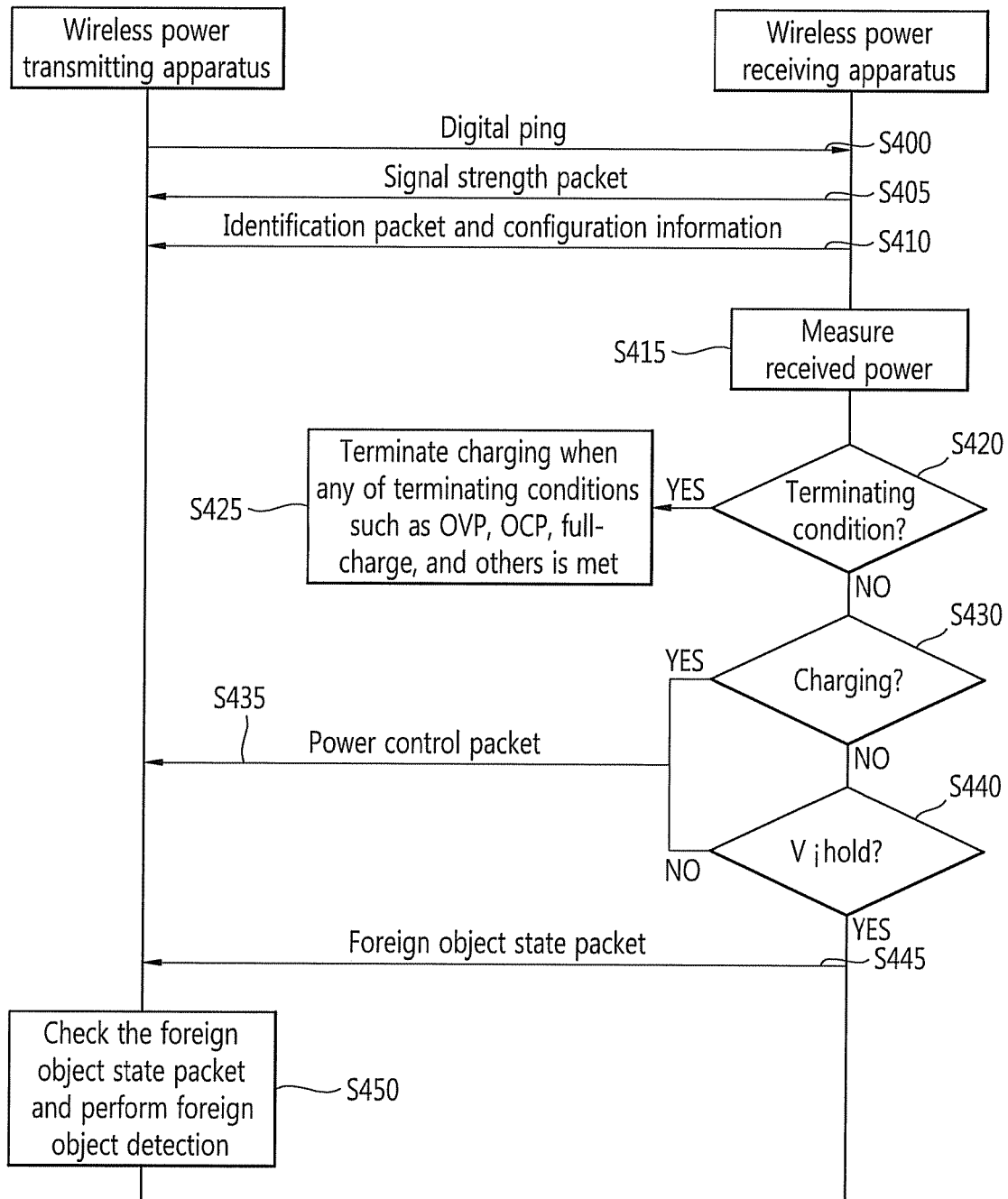


FIG. 5

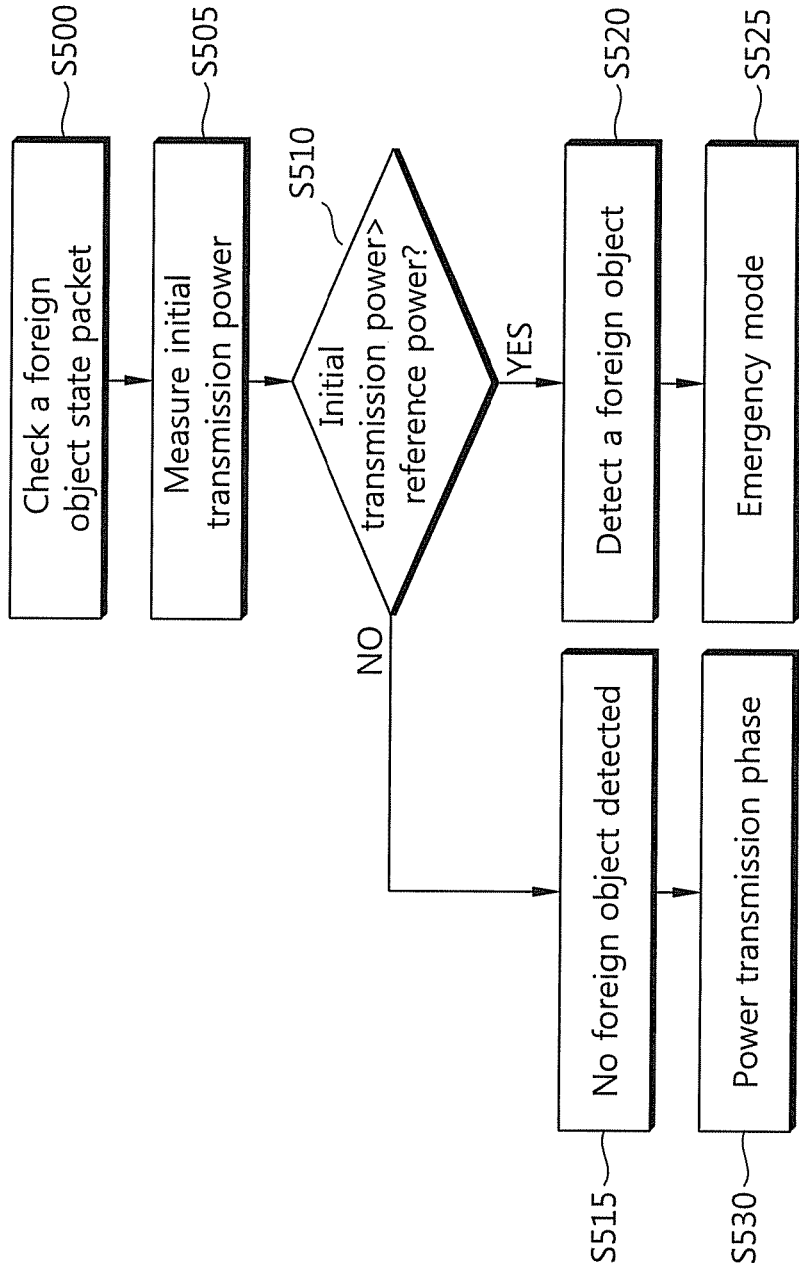
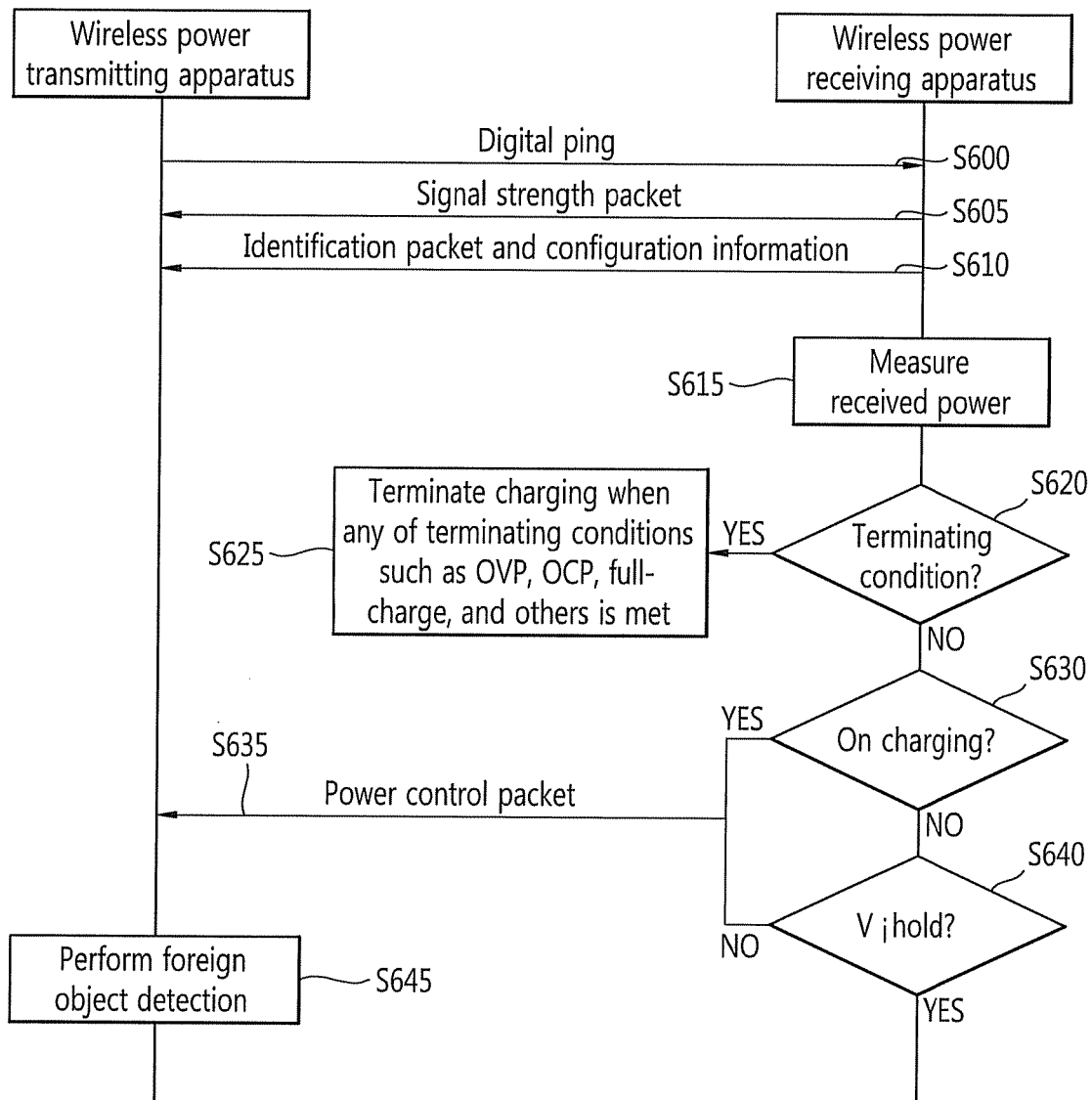


FIG. 6



**APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
DETECTING FOREIGN OBJECT IN
WIRELESS POWER TRANSMITTING
SYSTEM**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation and claims the priority benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/181,531, filed Feb. 14, 2014, which claims the benefit of priority of Korean Application No. 10-2013-0018183 filed on Feb. 20, 2013 in the Korean Intellectual Property Office, the contents of which are incorporated by reference in their entirety herein.

BACKGROUND

Technical Field

[0002] The present disclosure is related to wireless power transmission; more particularly, to an apparatus and method for detecting a foreign object in a wireless power transmitting system.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] In general, an external charger is used to charge portable terminals such as a mobile phone, notebook computer, or PDA by supplying electric energy (or electric power) thereto. Conventional portable terminals include battery cells storing supplied electric energy and a circuit intended for charging and discharging the battery cells, thereby providing electric energy to the portable terminals.

[0004] The electrical interface between the charger and the battery cells, through which battery cells are charged with electric energy, may take the form of contacts. A contact-type electrical interface receives commercial electricity, transforms the electricity into voltage and currents relevant to the battery cells, and provides electric energy to the battery cells through the contacts of the corresponding battery cells.

[0005] Contacts of this kind require physical cables or use of electrical wires. Therefore, when a large number of terminals requiring the contact-type electric interface for energy are used, a large number of cables tend to occupy considerable workspace and may be unsightly or disorganized because it is not easy to arrange the cables properly. Moreover, the contact-type electrical interface may cause problems such as instant discharge due to a potential difference between contacts, abrasion, risk of fire due to presence of flammable foreign objects, spontaneous discharge, decrease of battery lifetime, and degradation of battery performance.

[0006] Recently, to solve the aforementioned problems, charging systems employing wireless power transmission (hereinafter, referred to as wireless power transmitting systems) and control methods for such systems have begun development. A wireless power transmitting method is also called a contactless power transmitting method or no point-of-contact power transmitting method. A wireless power transmitting system comprises a wireless power transmitting apparatus, which provides electric energy through wireless power transmission, and at least one wireless power receiving apparatus, which receives electric energy provided wirelessly from the wireless power transmitting apparatus and charges battery cells with the received electric energy.

[0007] Once connections are well secured between a charger and a mobile terminal, a contact-type electrical interface suffers little from obstacles disturbing battery charge, such as foreign objects. In contrast, because of the inherent characteristics of a wireless power transmitting system utilizing no-point-of-contact charge, there is a high chance that foreign objects could be inserted between the wireless power receiving apparatus and wireless power transmitting apparatus during charging. If a foreign object such as a metallic part is present between the wireless power receiving apparatus and wireless power transmitting apparatus, smooth power transmission is impaired due to the foreign object. Furthermore, problems such as damage and even detonation of the corresponding product due to overload and heating of the foreign object may result. Therefore, there is a need for an apparatus and method which detects foreign objects in a wireless power transmitting system.

SUMMARY

[0008] An object of the present disclosure is to provide an apparatus and method which detects foreign objects in a wireless power transmitting system.

[0009] Another object of the present disclosure is to provide an apparatus and method which detects foreign objects based on a current induced in a primary coil of a wireless power transmitting system.

[0010] Yet another object of the present disclosure is to provide an apparatus and method which performs an operation in response to detection of foreign objects in a wireless power transmitting system.

[0011] Still another object of the present disclosure is to provide an apparatus and method of wireless power transmission equipped with a function which detects one or more foreign objects in a wireless power transmission system.

[0012] According to one aspect of the present disclosure, a wireless power transmitting apparatus which detects one or more foreign objects is provided. The apparatus comprises a primary core block coupled with a secondary core block installed in a wireless power receiving apparatus, where the primary core block transmits wireless power to the wireless power receiving apparatus through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance; an electric driving unit which applies an AC (alternating current) signal required for the primary core block to transmit the wireless power; and a control unit connected to the electric driving unit which generates a control signal to control the AC signal.

[0013] Once it is found that the initial voltage of an output terminal of the wireless power receiving apparatus connected to an external load is within the range of a reference voltage, the control unit measures the initial transmission power transmitted from the primary core block and performs a foreign object detection on the basis of the initial transmission power.

[0014] According to another aspect of the present disclosure, a method of detecting one or more foreign objects using a wireless power transmitting apparatus equipped with a primary core block is provided. The method comprises applying an AC signal required for transmitting wireless power to the primary core block; transmitting a power signal to a wireless power receiving apparatus, by coupling a secondary core block installed in the wireless power receiving apparatus with the primary core block through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance; checking whether the initial voltage of an output terminal of the wireless power

receiving apparatus connected to an external load is within the range of a reference voltage; measuring the initial transmission power transmitted from the primary core block; and performing a foreign object detection on the basis of the initial transmission power.

[0015] According to yet another aspect of the present disclosure, a wireless power receiving apparatus which detects one or more foreign objects is provided. The apparatus comprises a secondary core block coupled with a primary core block installed in a wireless power transmitting apparatus, which receives wireless power from the wireless power transmitting apparatus through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance; a rectification unit connected to the secondary core block, which provides power to a control unit and an external load by performing full-wave rectification on an AC waveform generated from the secondary core block; and a control unit which measures the initial voltage of an output terminal connected to the external load and, if the initial voltage is within the range of a reference voltage, controls the wireless power receiving apparatus to enter a foreign object detection phase.

[0016] According to still another aspect of the present disclosure, a method of detecting one or more foreign objects using a wireless power receiving apparatus equipped with a secondary core block is provided. The method comprises receiving a power signal from a wireless power transmitting apparatus, by being coupled with a primary core block installed in the wireless power transmitting apparatus through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance; performing full-wave rectification on an AC waveform generated from the secondary core block; measuring the initial voltage of an output terminal connected to an external load of the wireless power receiving apparatus; and in case the initial voltage is within the range of a reference voltage, controlling the wireless power receiving apparatus to enter a foreign object detection phase.

[0017] Additional aspects and/or advantages of the present disclosure will be set forth in part in the description which follows and, in part, will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the disclosure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide a further understanding of the present disclosure and constitute a part of specifications of the present disclosure, illustrate embodiments of the present disclosure and together with the corresponding descriptions serve to explain the principles of the present disclosure.

[0019] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating constituting elements of a wireless power transmitting system according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0020] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a wireless power transmitting apparatus according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0021] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a wireless power receiving apparatus according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0022] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection in a wireless power transmitting system according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0023] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0024] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection in a wireless power transmitting system according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0025] Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments of the present disclosure, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to the like elements throughout. The embodiments are described below in order to explain the present disclosure by referring to the figures.

[0026] The term “wireless power” is used to denote the energy of arbitrary shape related to electric fields, magnetic fields, and electromagnetic fields transmitted from a transmitter to a receiver without employing physical electromagnetic conductors. The wireless power may be called a power signal and may indicate an oscillating magnetic flux enclosed by a primary and secondary coil. For example, this document describes power transformation of a system intended to charge devices including but not limited to mobile phones, cordless phones, iPods, MP3 players, and headsets wirelessly. In general, basic principles of wireless transfer of energy rely on magnetic inductive coupling, magnetic resonance coupling (for instance, resonance induction) utilizing frequencies below 30 MHz, or both. For relatively high radiation levels, various frequencies below 135 kHz (LF) or above 13.56 MHz (HF), which include license-free frequencies, may be utilized.

[0027] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating constituting elements of a wireless power transmitting system according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0028] With reference to FIG. 1, a wireless power transmitting system 100 comprises a wireless power transmitting apparatus 110 and n wireless power receiving apparatuses 150-1, . . . , 150-n. Although a plurality of wireless power receiving apparatuses 150-1, . . . , 150-n are depicted, and will be referred to in reference to FIG. 1 for convenience, the present disclosure is not so limited and may function with only one wireless power receiving apparatus 150-1, as will become clear.

[0029] The wireless power transmitting apparatus 110 includes a primary core block. The primary core block may comprise a core and one or more primary coils 111. The wireless power transmitting apparatus 110 may have an arbitrary shape. For example, the apparatus may take the shape of a flat platform with a power transmission surface; each wireless power receiving apparatus 150-1, . . . , 150-n may be disposed on or around the platform.

[0030] The wireless power receiving apparatuses 150-1, . . . , 150-n may be separated from the wireless power transmitting apparatus 110. Each of the wireless power receiving apparatuses 150-1, . . . , 150-n is equipped with a secondary core block coupled with an electromagnetic field generated by the primary core block of the wireless power transmitting apparatus 110 in the vicinity thereof. Each secondary core block may comprise one or more secondary coils 151.

[0031] The wireless power transmitting apparatus 110 transmits power to the wireless power receiving apparatuses 150-1, . . . , 150-n without a direct electric contact. In this case, the primary core block and secondary core block are referred to as being coupled with each other through mag-

netic induction or resonance induction. The primary and secondary coil may assume an arbitrary shape relevant to each other; as one example, the coils may be in the form of copper wires wound along the periphery of a block made from a high permeability material such as ferrite or amorphous metal.

[0032] The wireless power receiving apparatuses **150-1**, . . . , **150-n** are connected to an external load (not shown) and provide power received wirelessly from the wireless power transmitting apparatus **110** to the external load. For example, the wireless power receiving apparatuses **150-1**, . . . , **150-n** may each convey the received power to an object which consumes or stores electric power, such as a portable electric or electronic device, rechargeable battery cell, or battery.

[0033] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a wireless power transmitting apparatus according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0034] With reference to FIG. 2, a wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** comprises a primary coil **210**, electric driving unit **220**, control unit **230**, and current measurement unit **240**.

[0035] The electric driving unit **220** is connected to the primary coil **210** and may apply electric driving signals—for example, AC signals—to the primary coil **210** to generate an electromagnetic field.

[0036] The control unit **230** is connected to the electric driving unit **220**, generates a control signal **231** which controls an AC signal needed for the primary coil **210** to generate an induced magnetic field or magnetic resonance, and provides the generated control signal to the electric driving unit **220**.

[0037] The control unit **230** controls the operation of the wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** in a ping phase, ID identification and configuration phase, foreign object detection phase, and power transmission phase. The control unit **230** may generate packets required for each phase and transmit the generated packets to a wireless power receiving apparatus, or receive packets from the wireless power receiving apparatus.

[0038] The ping phase may be defined as an attempt to discover an object capable of receiving wireless power. In the ping phase, the control unit **230** performs a digital ping and applies a control signal **231** to the electric driving unit **220** so that the primary coil **210** may transmit a power signal at an operating point. If a correct signal strength packet is received from the wireless power receiving apparatus within a time window, the control unit **230** changes the state of the wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** to the ID identification and configuration phase.

[0039] In the ID identification and configuration phase, the control unit **230** identifies the wireless power receiving apparatus and collects configuration information of the wireless power receiving apparatus. At this time, the control unit **230** receives an identification packet from the wireless power receiving apparatus; configuration information may also be received.

[0040] In the foreign object detection phase, the control unit **230** performs foreign object detection (FOD). If no foreign object is detected, the control unit **230** changes the state of the wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** to the power transmission phase and applies a control signal **231** to the electric driving unit **220** so that wireless power may be transmitted. In this power transmission phase, the wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** may transmit wireless

power to the wireless power receiving apparatus through the primary coil **210**. On the other hand, if a foreign object is detected, the control unit **230** stops applying the control signal **231** and enters an emergency mode. According to the phase transition scheme above, before the power transmission phase, foreign object detection is performed. In other words, since foreign object detection is performed right after the wireless power transmitting apparatus **200** and the wireless power receiving apparatus identify (or recognize) each other, a risk due to performing foreign object detection in the middle of transmission of wireless power may be avoided beforehand.

[0041] Although the present embodiment separates the foreign object detection phase from the power transmission phase, the two phases may be integrated (or incorporated) into a single phase and controlled as a single phase. Similarly, the foreign object detection phase may be integrated (or incorporated) into the power transmission phase and may be controlled as a single procedure. In what follows, the foreign object detection phase is treated as an independent phase, and descriptions will be provided on the basis of such an assumption, but manners of integrating the phases will be obvious from the description to those of skill in the art.

[0042] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a wireless power receiving apparatus according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0043] With reference to FIG. 3, a wireless power receiving apparatus **300** comprises a secondary coil **310**, a rectification unit **320**, and a control unit **330**.

[0044] The rectification unit **320** provides full-wave rectification of an AC waveform generated in the secondary coil **310**. For example, the rectification unit **320** may use four diodes forming a full-bridge configuration. Also, the rectification unit **320** may provide power to the control unit **330** and the external load **340**.

[0045] The control unit **330** receives power from the rectification unit **320** and performs operations such as packet generation and transmission at each phase and control of wireless power transmission. As one example, a load modulation technique may be used for packet transmission. In this case, a packet is transmitted through the secondary coil **310**, and the same frequency band as used for wireless power transmission is employed. As another example, a frequency band separate from the frequency band meant for wireless power transmission may be employed for packet transmission, and packets may be transmitted using techniques including but not limited to RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), Bluetooth, or NFC (Near Field Communication).

[0046] In the ID identification and configuration phase, the control unit **330** may generate an identification packet indicating a unique ID of the wireless power receiving apparatus **300**, and may also generate configuration information of the wireless power receiving apparatus **300**. The control unit **330** transmits the identification packet and/or configuration information to a wireless power transmitting apparatus.

[0047] The control unit **330** may measure an initial voltage V_i of an output terminal connected to an external load. The initial voltage V_i may be the voltage measured before the power transmission phase where wireless power is received and after the ID identification and configuration phase is completed. Alternatively, the initial voltage V_i may be defined as the voltage of an output terminal measured in a standby before wireless charging starts.

[0048] If the initial voltage V_i in a steady state is within a range of a reference voltage (for example, 7.0 V.about.10.5 V), the control unit **330** enters the foreign object detection phase, generates a foreign object state packet used for foreign object detection, and transmits the foreign object state packet to a wireless power transmitting apparatus. The foreign object state packet is used to initiate or trigger foreign object detection in the wireless power transmitting apparatus.

[0049] In the power transmission phase, the control unit **330** measures power received through the secondary coil **310**, generates a power control packet, and transmits the generated power control packet to the wireless power transmitting apparatus. The power control packet is used to initiate or trigger power transmission by the wireless power transmitting apparatus. In other words, the control unit **330** may receive required power by using packets necessary for control of wireless power transmission.

[0050] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection in a wireless power transmitting system according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0051] With reference to FIG. 4, the wireless power transmitting apparatus in the ping phase performs a digital ping in which the wireless power transmitting apparatus transmits a power signal at an operating point to a wireless power receiving apparatus at **S400**.

[0052] After receiving a power signal in the ping phase, the wireless power receiving apparatus generates a signal strength packet indicating strength of the received power signal and transmits the signal strength packet to the wireless power transmitting apparatus at **S405**. The wireless power receiving apparatus also generates an identification packet indicating a unique ID of the wireless power receiving apparatus and configuration information thereof, and transmits the identification packet and configuration information to the wireless power transmitting apparatus at **S410**.

[0053] The wireless power receiving apparatus measures a received power at **S415**. From this moment, the wireless power receiving apparatus enters a phase meant for setting up an initial voltage V .

[0054] The wireless power receiving apparatus checks whether a terminating condition such as an over voltage power (OVP), over current power (OCP), or full charge is met at **S420**. If any of the terminating conditions such as OVP, OCP, full charge, or others is met, the wireless power receiving apparatus terminates the charging at **S425**. If the terminating conditions is not met, the wireless power receiving apparatus checks whether it is in the middle of receiving wireless power from the wireless power transmitting apparatus—that is, whether it is charging—at **S430**.

[0055] If it is determined at **S430** that the wireless power receiving apparatus is charging, the wireless power receiving apparatus compares a required power value with a received power value, generates a power control packet based on the comparison, and transmits the generated power control packet to the wireless power transmitting apparatus at **S435**. If it is determined at **S430** that the wireless power receiving apparatus is not charging, the wireless power receiving apparatus checks whether the initial voltage V_i is in a hold stage **S440**. If the initial voltage V_i in a steady state is within the range of a reference voltage (for example, 7.0 V.about.10.5 V), the wireless power receiving apparatus completes the initial configuration thereof. By doing so, the

initial voltage V_i enters the hold state, and the wireless power receiving apparatus may enter the foreign object detection phase.

[0056] If the initial voltage V_i is not in the hold state, the wireless power receiving apparatus generates a power control packet and transmits the generated power control packet to the wireless power transmitting apparatus, in the same way as when the wireless power receiving apparatus is charging, at **S435**.

[0057] If the initial voltage V_i is in the hold state, the wireless power receiving apparatus enters the foreign object detection phase. At this time, the wireless power receiving apparatus generates a foreign object state packet and transmits the generated foreign object state packet to the wireless power transmitting apparatus at **S445**.

[0058] The foreign object state packet, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure, comprises a preamble, header, message, and checksum. The preamble may consist of a minimum of 11 bits to a maximum of 25 bits, and all of the bits may be set to zero. The preamble allows the wireless power transmitting apparatus to accurately detect a start bit of the header of the foreign object state packet and synchronize with incoming data.

[0059] The header indicates a packet type and may be comprised of 8 bits. As one example, the value of the foreign object state packet header may be 0x00. In this case, the content of the message may be set to 0, that is, 0x00. As another example, the value of the foreign object state packet header may be set to 0x05, and the same value may be used as the header of a charge state packet. However, if the value of the one-byte message of the charge state packet is set to 0x00, the foreign object state packet may be indicated as well. In other words, the foreign object state packet may be included in the charge state packet based on the message of the charge state packet. Other values and corresponding meanings are also possible without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

[0060] The wireless power transmitting apparatus determines, on the basis of the header value of a received packet or the value of a received message, whether the received packet is the foreign object state packet. If it is determined that the foreign object state packet has been received, the wireless power transmitting apparatus performs foreign object detection at **S450**. The operations of checking the foreign object state packet and foreign object detection are performed by the control unit **230** of the wireless power transmitting apparatus.

[0061] In the following paragraphs, the operation of foreign object detection performed by the wireless power transmitting apparatus will be described in more detail with reference to an additional drawing. For the purposes of the following paragraphs, foreign object detection by the wireless power transmitting apparatus may be regarded to be the same as the foreign object detection performed by the control unit **230** of the wireless power transmitting apparatus; however, it will be recognized that other components of the wireless power transmitting apparatus, including ones not previously described, may conduct one or both operations.

[0062] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0063] With reference to FIG. 5, the wireless power transmitting apparatus checks a foreign object state packet

received from the wireless power receiving apparatus at S500. If the received packet is not the foreign object state packet, the wireless power transmitting apparatus starts normal charging. In other words, the wireless power transmitting apparatus enters the power transmission phase.

[0064] To make sure a received packet corresponds to the foreign object state packet, the wireless power transmitting apparatus checks whether the header of a received packet or the value of a message indicates the foreign object state packet. For example, in case the header is 0x00, or in the case the header is 0x05 and the value of the message is 0x00, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may identify the packet received from the wireless power receiving apparatus as corresponding to the foreign object state packet.

[0065] Since the foreign object state packet is transmitted from the wireless power receiving apparatus to the wireless power transmitting apparatus when the initial voltage V_i is in a hold state (or when the initial setting is completed), the foreign object state packet may also be called an initial setting complete packet. That is, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may recognize the completion of an initial setting of the wireless power receiving apparatus by receiving the foreign object state packet. Similarly, since the wireless power transmitting apparatus starts foreign object detection by receiving the foreign object state packet, the foreign object state packet may also be called a foreign object confirmation request packet.

[0066] While the initial setting of the wireless power receiving apparatus is completed, the wireless power transmitting apparatus enters the foreign object detection phase and measures an initial transmission power P_i generated in the primary coil at S505. Then the wireless power transmitting apparatus compares the initial transmission power P_i with a reference power P_R at S510. The parameters such as the reference power P_R may be stored beforehand in the control unit 230 as the initial setting values or may be obtained later through the configuration information received from the wireless power receiving apparatus.

[0067] If the initial transmission power P_i is smaller than or equal to the reference power P_R , the wireless power transmitting apparatus determines that no foreign object is detected. In other words, the wireless power transmitting apparatus is unable to detect a foreign object at S515. If no foreign object is detected, the wireless power transmitting apparatus enters the power transmission phase at S530.

[0068] On the other hand, if the initial transmission power P_i is larger than the reference power P_R , the wireless power transmitting apparatus determines that a foreign object has been detected. In other words, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may detect a foreign object at S520. If a foreign object is detected, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may operate in emergency mode at S525.

[0069] Here, the reference power P_R is the power transmitted through the primary coil when no foreign object exists and when the wireless power transmitting apparatus is in a steady state before transmission of wireless power is started, which is a value that may be obtained experimentally. In other words, the reference power P_R corresponds to the power transmitted through the primary coil when there is no foreign object and the initial setting of the wireless power receiving apparatus is completed. The reference power P_R may be the power consumed internally within the wireless power transmitting apparatus.

[0070] If a foreign object such as metal comes between the wireless power transmitting apparatus and wireless power receiving apparatus, a certain predetermined amount of leakage current $I_{leakage}$ flows through the primary coil even before a reference AC signal is applied, and an initial transmission power P_i is transmitted from this time on. This indicates that a certain predetermined amount of power ($P_i - P_R$) is consumed continuously due to foreign objects even while the wireless power transmitting apparatus is in an initial setting state before entering the power transmission phase. Therefore, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may detect an element causing interference on the transmission of wireless power, for example a foreign object such as metal, on the basis of the initial transmission power P_i and reference power P_R .

[0071] Assuming that the wireless power transmitting apparatus performs foreign object detection in the power transmission phase, after estimating power loss on the basis of the value of transmission power with respect to the received power of the wireless power receiving apparatus, the error in detecting foreign objects then becomes large, due to the difference of loss between individual samples of the wireless power transmitting apparatus and wireless power receiving apparatus and due to the deviation according to charging positions. Accordingly, due to a delay in detecting a foreign object, a risk due to heating of a foreign object is increased. On the other hand, according to the present embodiment, foreign object detection is performed in the initial setting complete state before output of the wireless power receiving apparatus is turned on; thus, a time delay in detecting a foreign object may be reduced and the risk due to heating of the foreign object may be avoided beforehand.

[0072] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for performing foreign object detection in a wireless power transmitting system according to another embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0073] With reference to FIG. 6, the operations at S600 to S640 are the same as the operations at S400 to S440, respectively.

[0074] It should be noted, however, that the wireless power transmitting apparatus of FIG. 4 explicitly receives the foreign object state packet at S445 and enters the foreign object detection phase, but the wireless power transmitting apparatus of FIG. 6 may implicitly enter the foreign object detection phase without receiving the foreign object state packet. In this regard, the method for detection foreign objects of FIG. 6 differs from that of FIG. 4. Therefore, the wireless power transmitting apparatus may enter the foreign object detection phase autonomously and then perform foreign object detection at S645. This is allowed because the wireless power transmitting apparatus, by receiving identification packet and configuration information from the wireless power receiving apparatus in the ID identification and configuration phase, is expected to enter the foreign object detection phase promptly.

[0075] The terms “foreign object” and “foreign objects” have been used interchangeably above. It will be understood that the principles and embodiments disclosed may be used to detect and respond to either one or multiple foreign objects.

[0076] All of the aforementioned functions may be performed by a processor including but not limited to a micro-processor, controller, microcontroller, or ASIC (Application

Specific Integrated Circuit) controlled by software or program codes implemented to perform the functions. It should be noted that the design, development, and implementation of the codes would be understood clearly to those skilled in the art on the basis of the descriptions of the present disclosure.

[0077] So far, the present disclosure has been described with reference to embodiments. It should be understood by those skilled in the art, however, that the present disclosure may be modified or changed in various ways without departing from the technical principles and scope. Therefore, the present disclosure is not limited to the embodiments above, but the present disclosure includes all of the embodiments belonging to the technical scope of the present disclosure defined by the appended claims.

[0078] By performing foreign object detection while a wireless power receiving apparatus is in an initial setting completion state, before the output of the wireless power receiving apparatus is turned on, delay in detecting foreign objects may be reduced, and a risk due to heating of a foreign object may be avoided.

[0079] Although a few embodiments of the present disclosure have been shown and described, it would be appreciated by those skilled in the art that changes may be made in this embodiment without departing from the principles and spirit of the invention, the scope of which is defined in the claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A wireless power transmitting apparatus detecting a foreign object comprising:

a primary core block coupled with a secondary core block equipped in a wireless power receiving apparatus through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance and configured for transmitting wireless power to the wireless power receiving apparatus by the magnetic induction or the magnetic resonance;

an electric driving unit connected to the primary core block and configured for applying an alternating current (AC) signal required for the primary core block to transmit the wireless power; and

a control unit connected to the electric driving unit and configured for generating a control signal for controlling the AC signal, wherein the control unit measures an initial transmission power transmitted from the primary core block and performs a foreign object detection on the basis of the initial transmission power, after the control unit determines that an initial voltage of an output terminal of the wireless power receiving apparatus connected to an external load belongs to the range of a reference voltage.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control unit compares the initial transmission power with a reference power, and determines that the foreign object has been detected if the initial transmission power is larger than the reference power.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control unit checks whether the initial voltage is within the range of the reference voltage by receiving from the wireless power receiving apparatus a foreign object state packet indicating a start of the foreign object detection.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein, after determining that the initial voltage is within the range of the reference voltage, the control unit controls the wireless power transmitting apparatus to enter a foreign object detection phase.

5. A method of detecting one or more foreign objects using a wireless power transmitting apparatus equipped with a primary coil, the method comprising:

applying an alternating current (AC) signal required for transmitting wireless power to the primary coil;

transmitting a power signal to a wireless power receiving apparatus;

checking whether an initial voltage of an output terminal of the wireless power receiving apparatus connected to an external load is within a range of a reference voltage;

measuring an initial transmission power transmitted from the primary coil; and

performing a foreign object detection on the basis of the initial transmission power.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the performing of the foreign object detection comprises:

comparing the initial transmission power with a reference power; and determining that one or more foreign objects have been detected if the initial transmission power is larger than the reference power.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

receiving from the wireless power receiving apparatus a foreign object state packet indicating a start of the foreign object detection, wherein whether the initial voltage is within the range of the reference voltage is checked on the basis of the foreign object state packet.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein, if it is determined that the initial voltage is within the range of the reference voltage, the wireless power transmitting apparatus enters a foreign object detection phase.

9. A wireless power transmitting apparatus comprising:

a primary coil configured to transmit wireless power to a wireless power receiving apparatus through magnetic induction or magnetic resonance;

an electric driving unit connected to the primary coil and configured to supply an alternating current (AC) signal required for the primary coil to transmit the wireless power; and

a control unit connected to the electric driving unit and configured to manage transmission of the wireless power via the primary coil, the control unit configured to:

cause the primary coil to initially transmit a low-voltage power signal, wherein an initial voltage of the low-voltage power signal is lower than a power transmission voltage for the transmission of wireless power;

determine whether a foreign object is detected based on a difference between the a first value and a reference value, wherein the first value represents an amount of power associated with the primary coil configured for transmission of the low-voltage power signal, and wherein the reference value is an experimentally measured amount of power expected from the primary coil when no foreign object is present and the primary coil is configured for transmission of the low-voltage power signal at the initial voltage;

determine to enter into a power transfer phase based on a determination of that no foreign object is detected, wherein the power transfer phase includes the transmission of the wireless power at the power transmission voltage; and

refrain from entering into the power transfer phase when a foreign object is detected.

10. The wireless power transmitting apparatus of claim 9, wherein the control unit is further configured to obtain the reference value from the wireless power receiving apparatus.

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