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(54) **FOLDABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE INCLUDING HINGE ASSEMBLY**

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(71) Applicant: **Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.**,  
Gyeonggi-do (KR)

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(72) Inventors: **Heebo SHIM**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Jongmin KANG**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Jingook KIM**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Suman LEE**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Wonseok RHEE**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Seongki JEONG**, Gyeonggi-do (KR);  
**Seungwhae CHOI**, Gyeonggi-do (KR)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An electronic device is provided, which includes a hinge structure having a support portion located between the flexible printed circuit board and the flexible display, wherein, in an unfolded state, at least part of the support portion is disposed between the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate, a first bracket coupled to the first housing and rotating as the first housing rotates about a first rotation axis, and a second bracket coupled to the second housing and rotating as the second housing rotates about a second rotation axis, wherein, in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the support portion, the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate support at least one region of the flexible display in a state that the first hinge plate is at least partially supported by a first area of the support portion and the second hinge plate is at least partially supported by a second area of the support portion opposite to the first area, and wherein, in a folded state of the electronic device, the support portion is spaced apart from the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate.

(21) Appl. No.: **18/736,898**

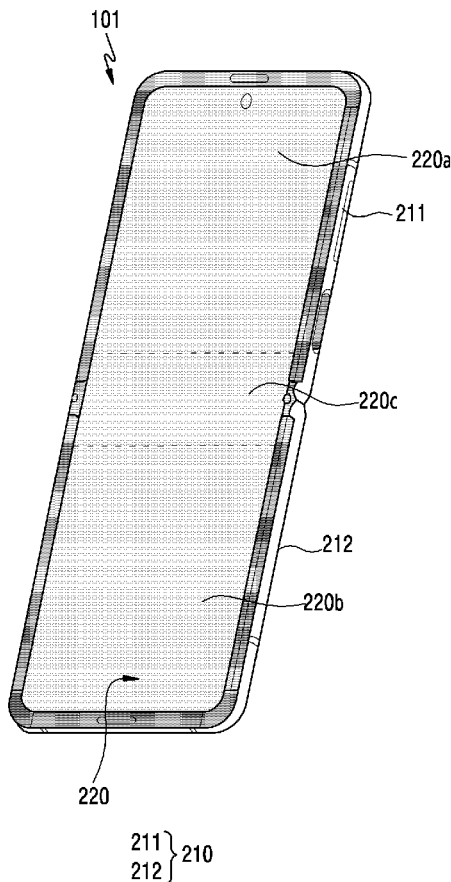
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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation of application No. 18/125,493, filed on Mar. 23, 2023, now Pat. No. 12,038,794, which is a continuation of application No. 17/172,768, filed on Feb. 10, 2021, now Pat. No. 11,625,073.

**Foreign Application Priority Data**

(30) Feb. 10, 2020 (KR) ..... 10-2020-0015993



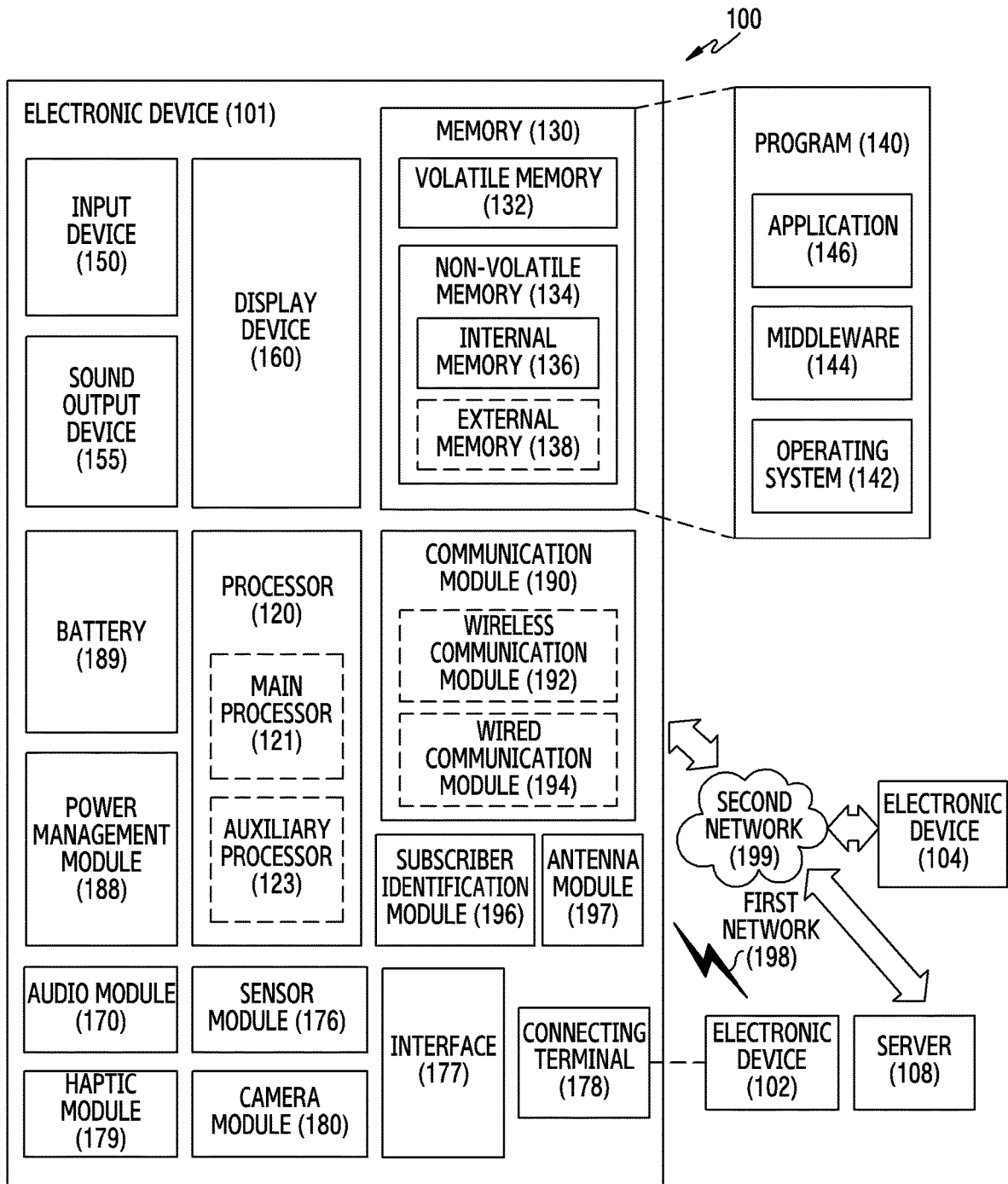


FIG. 1

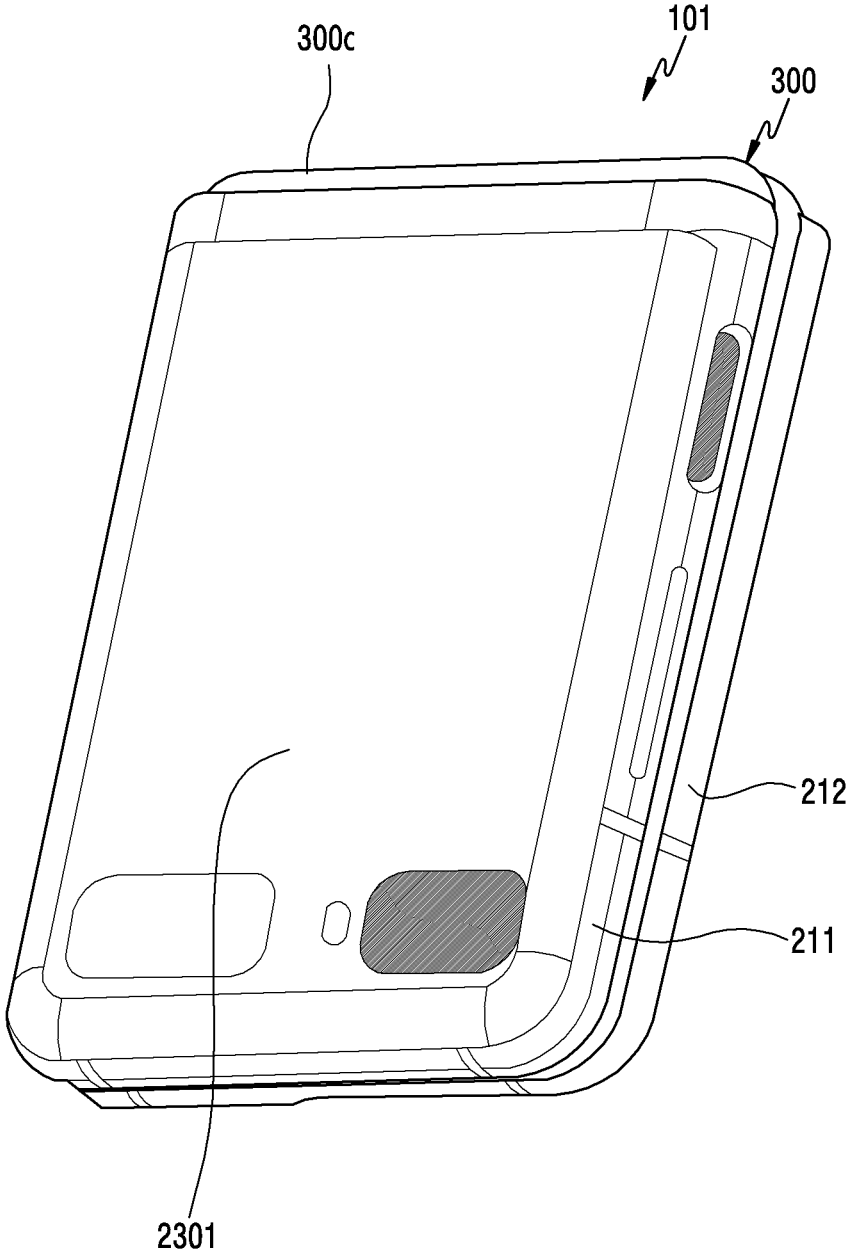


FIG. 2A

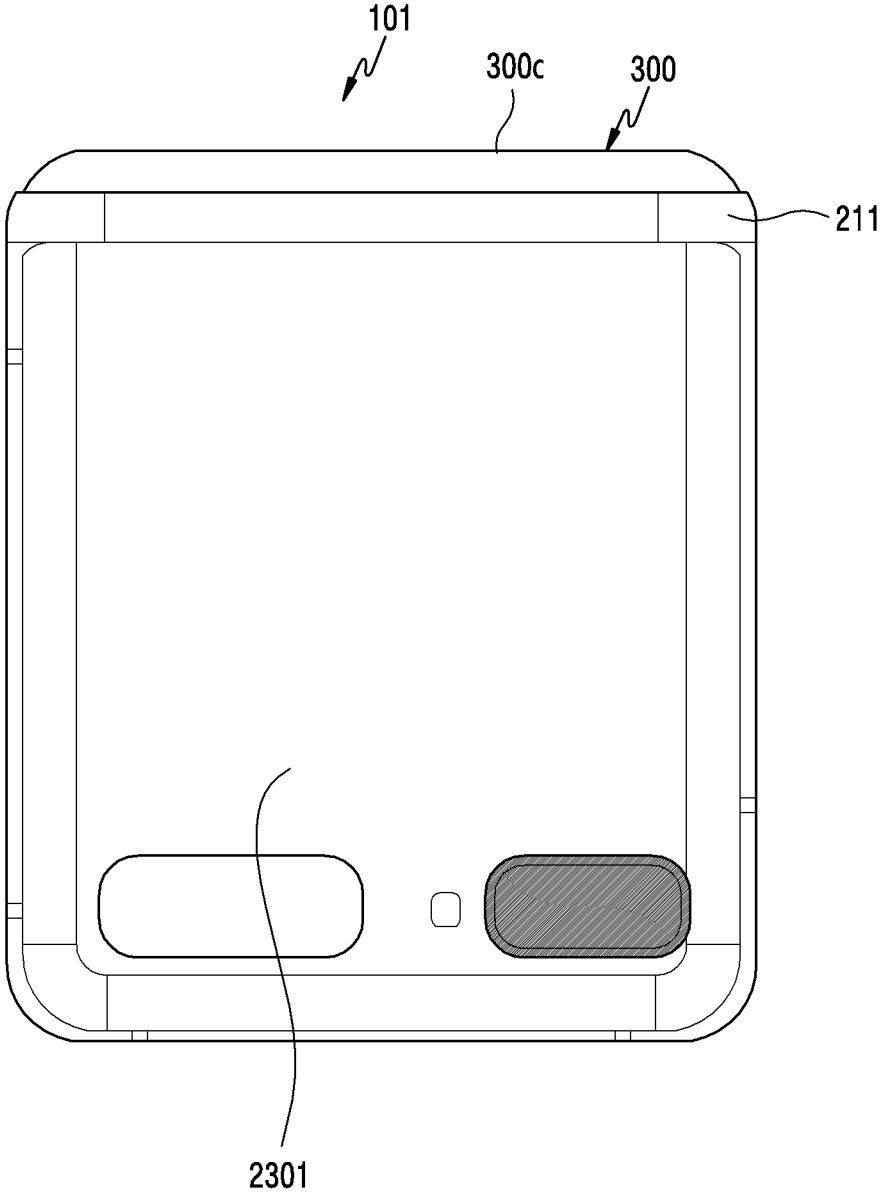


FIG. 2B

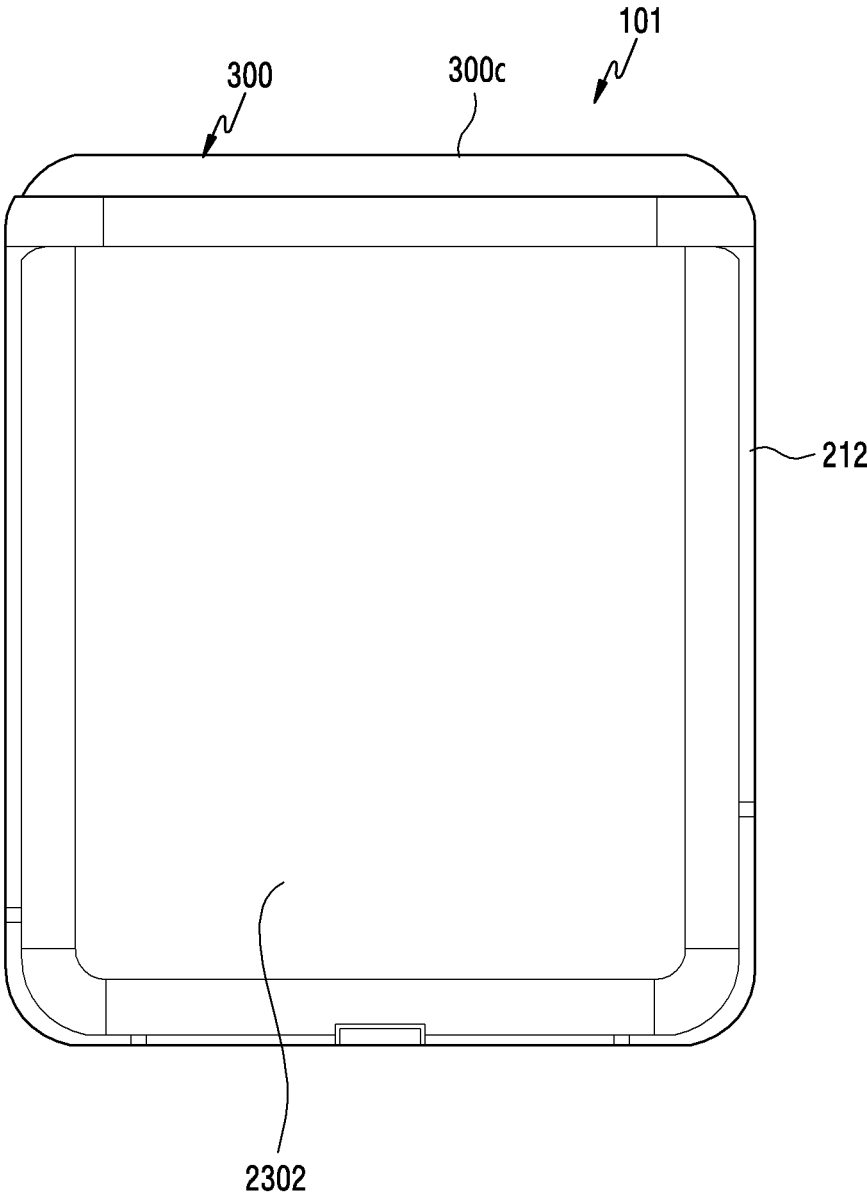


FIG.2C

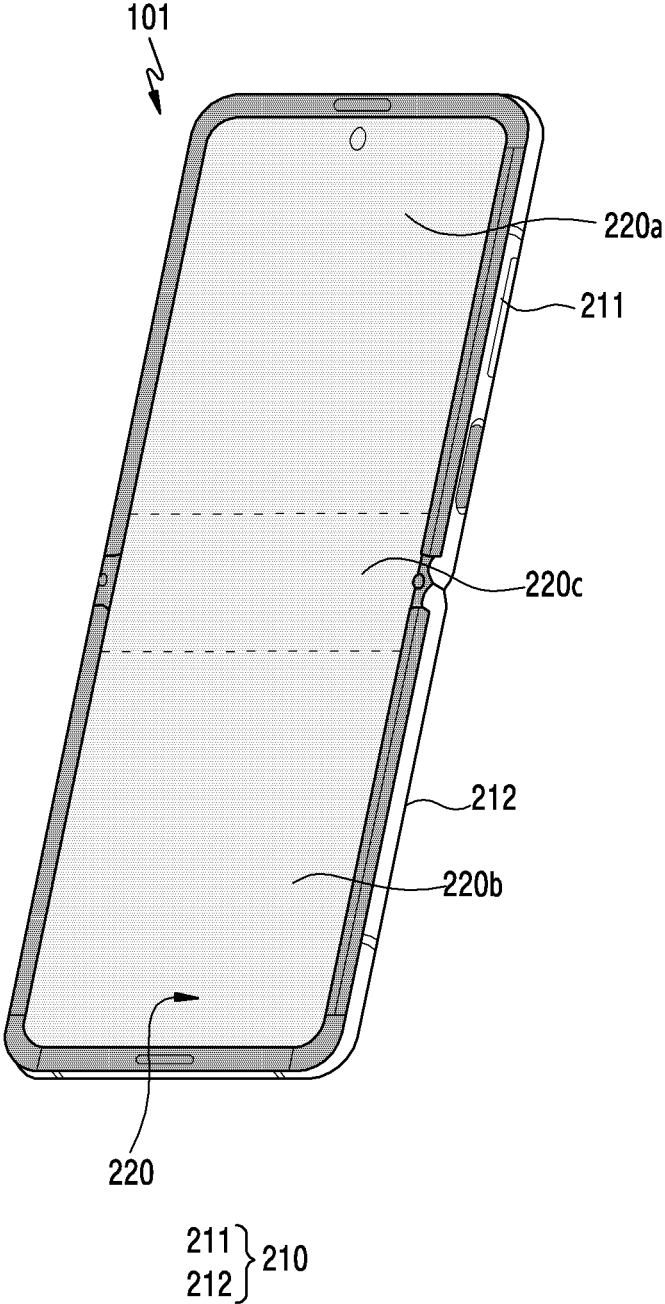


FIG.3A

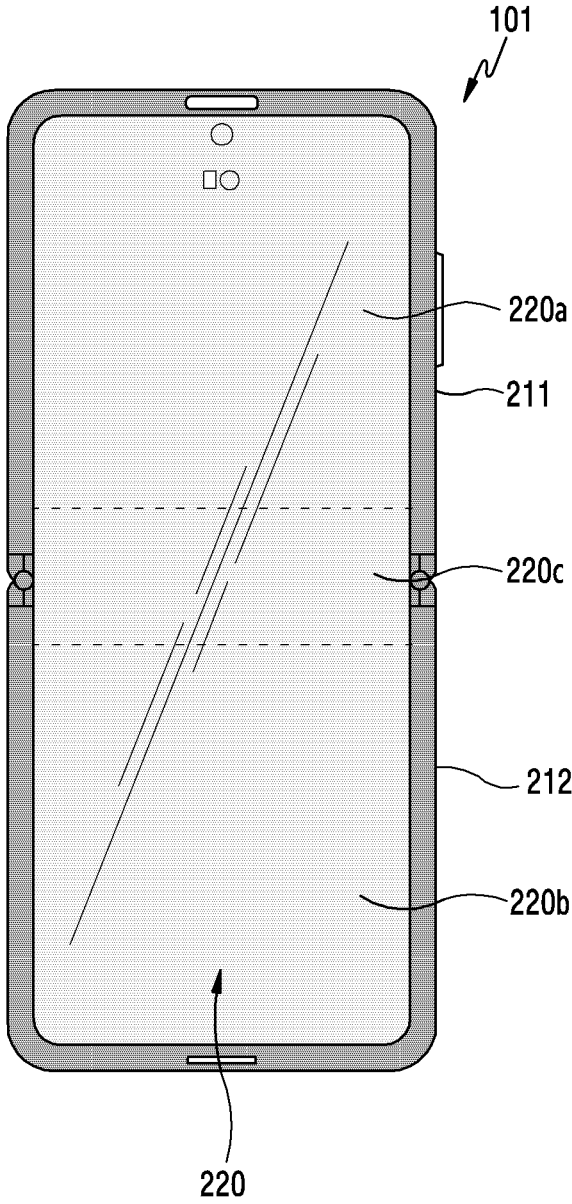


FIG.3B

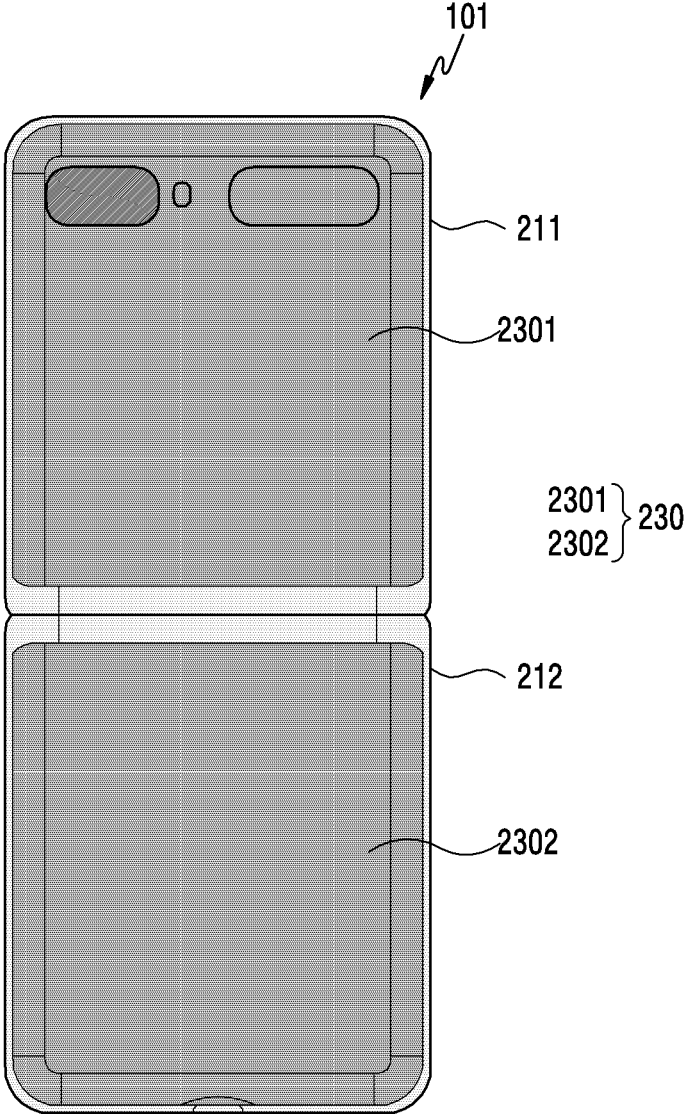


FIG.3C



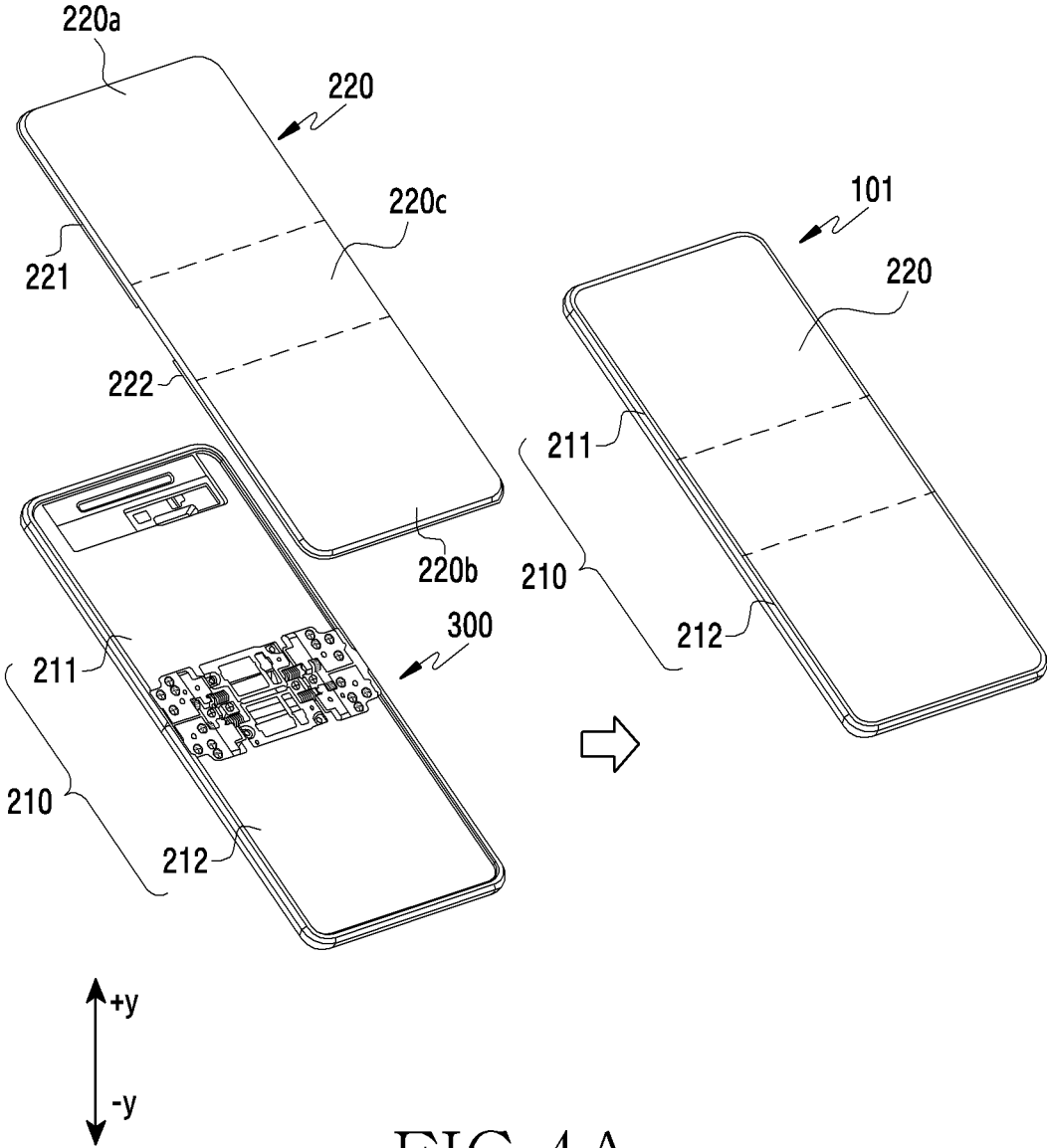


FIG.4A

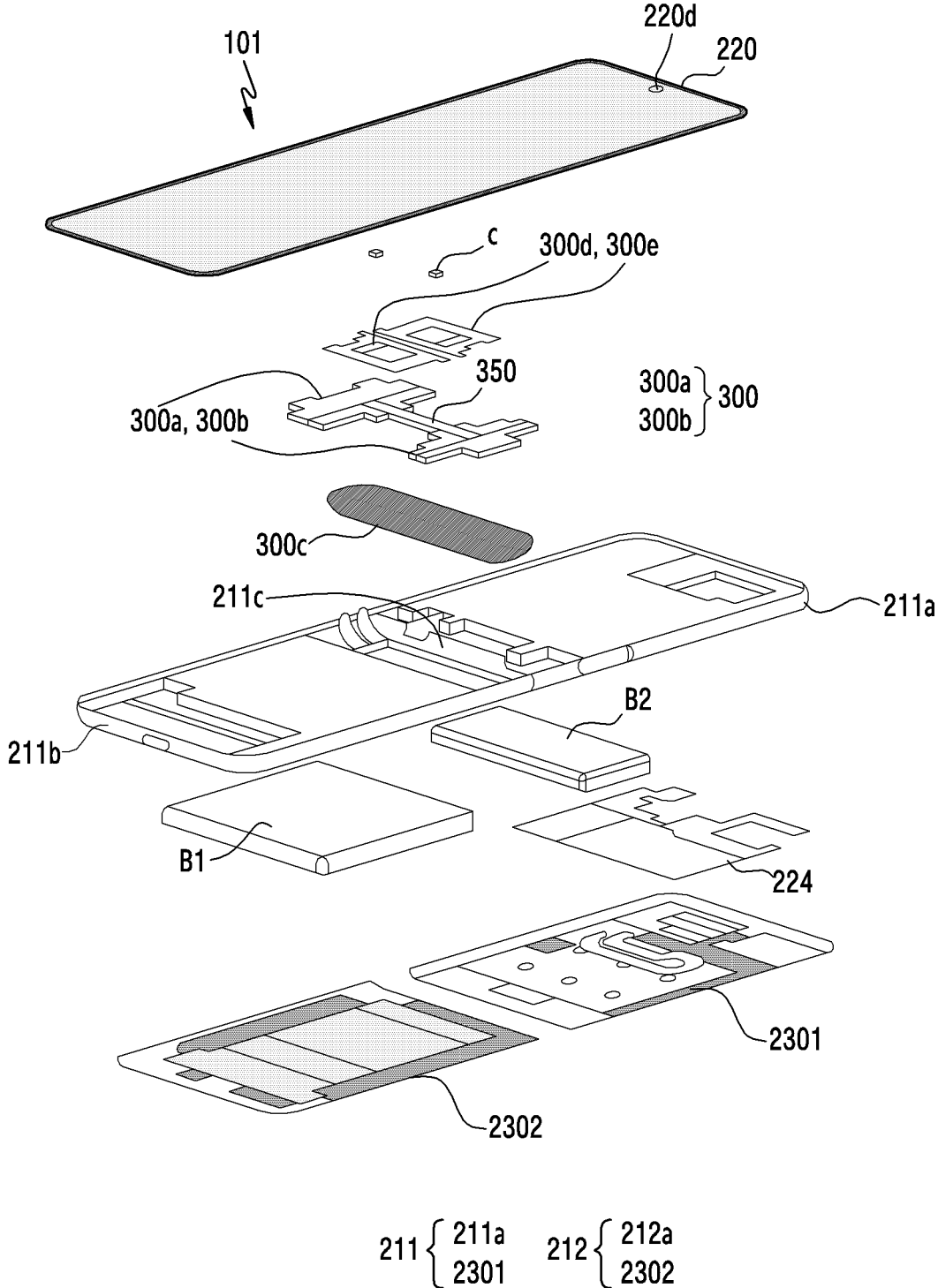


FIG.4B

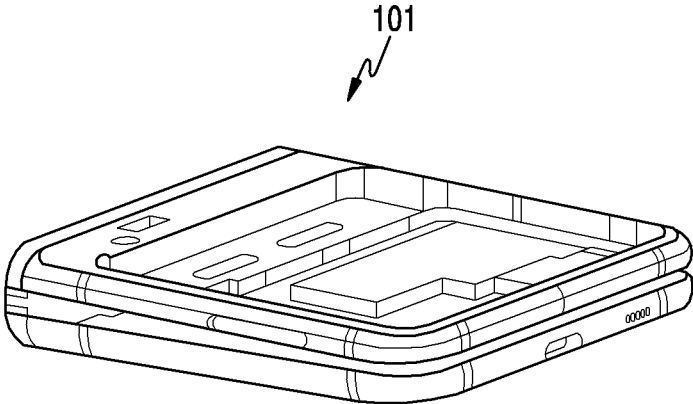


FIG.5A

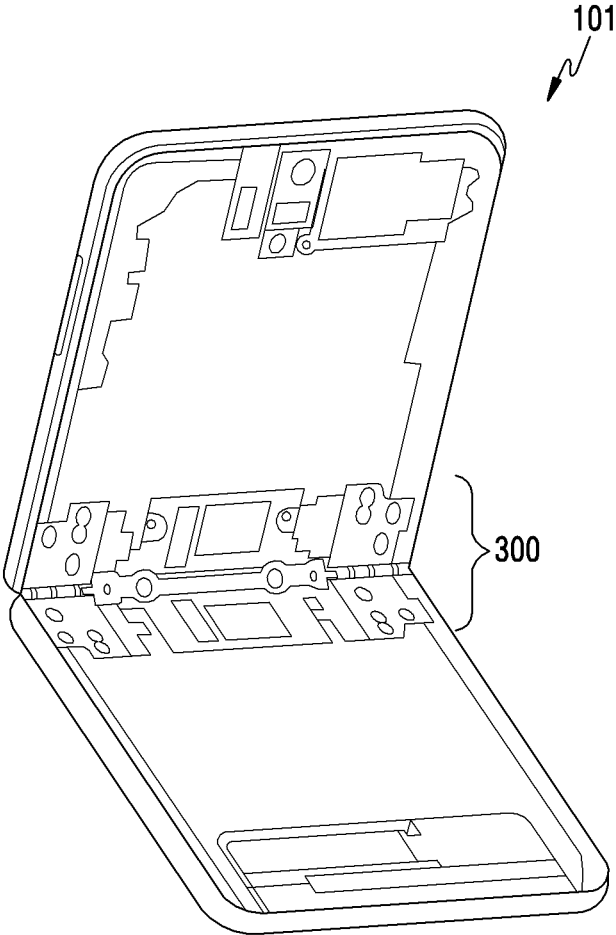


FIG.5B

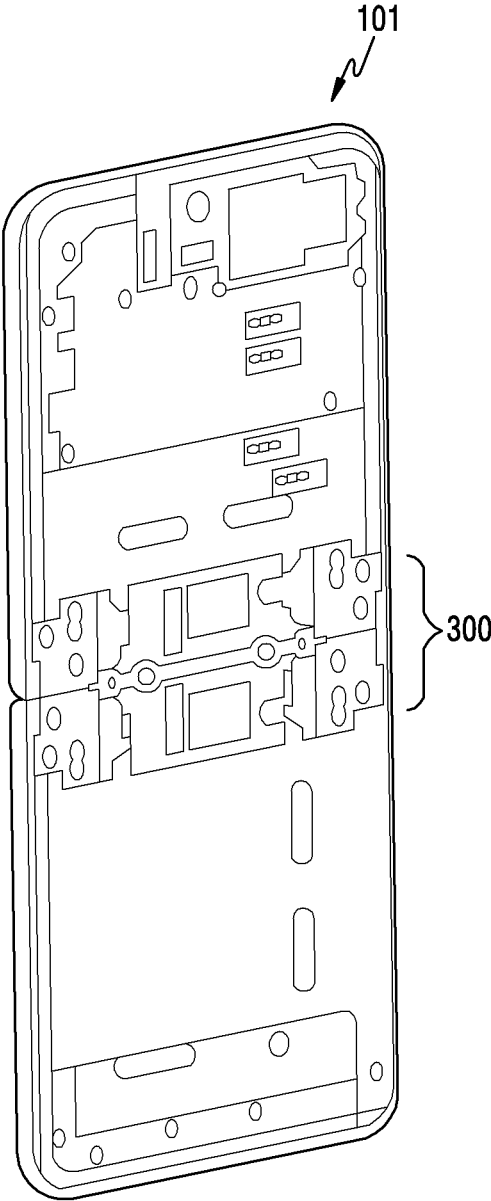


FIG.5C

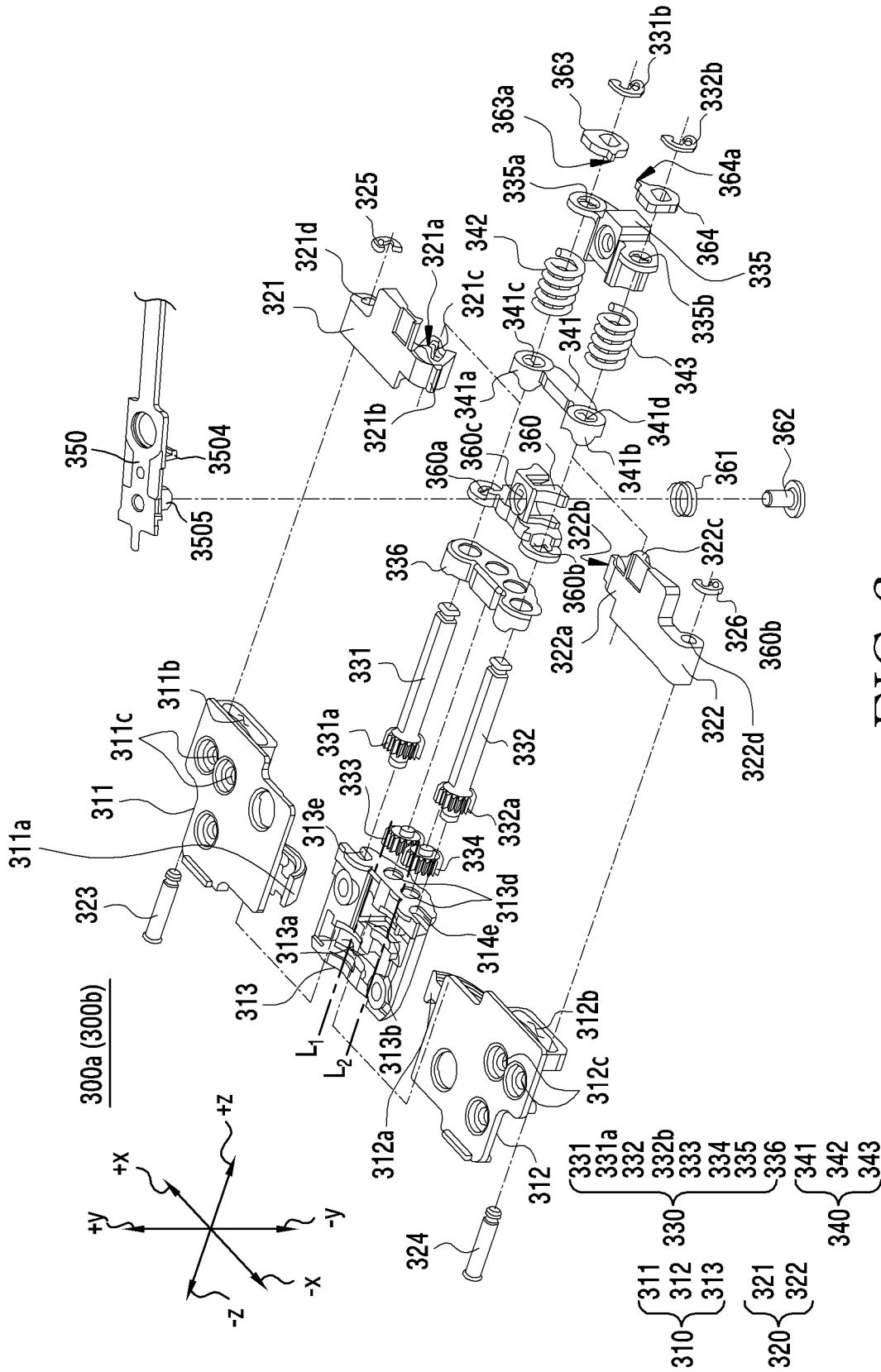


FIG.6

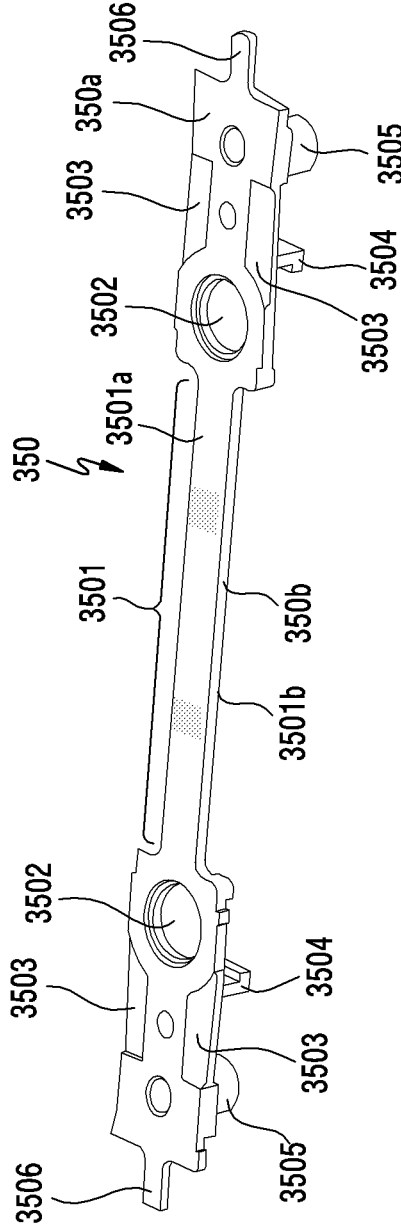


FIG. 7A

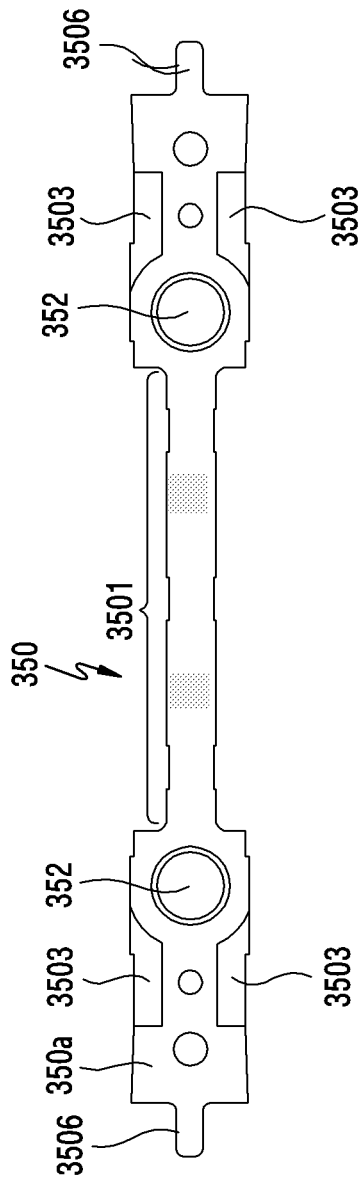


FIG. 7B



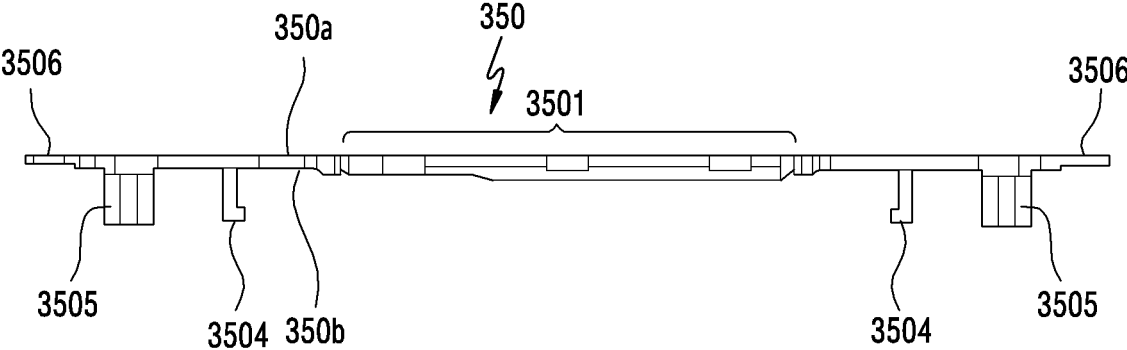


FIG. 7C

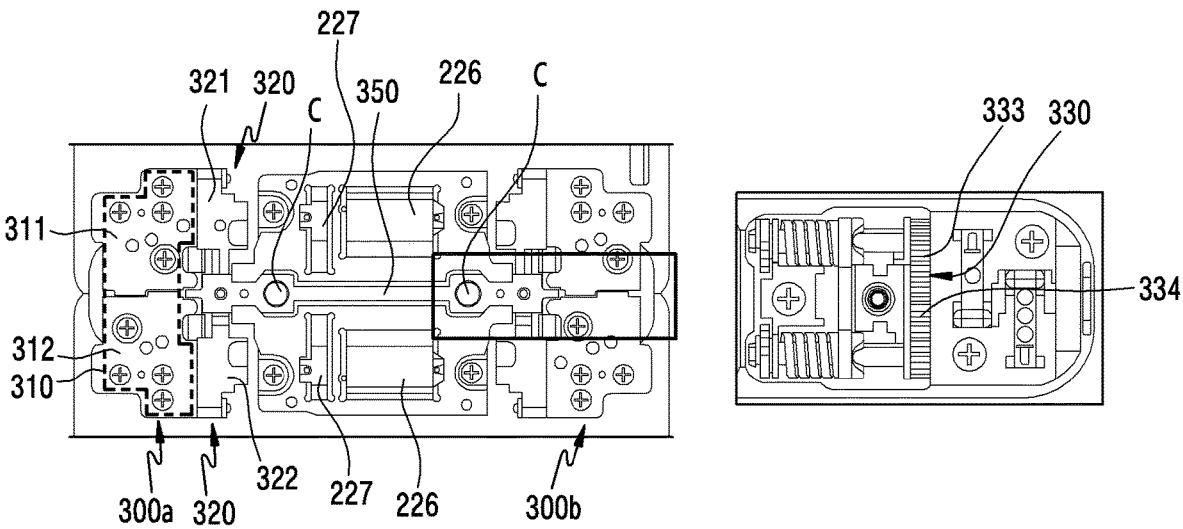


FIG.8A

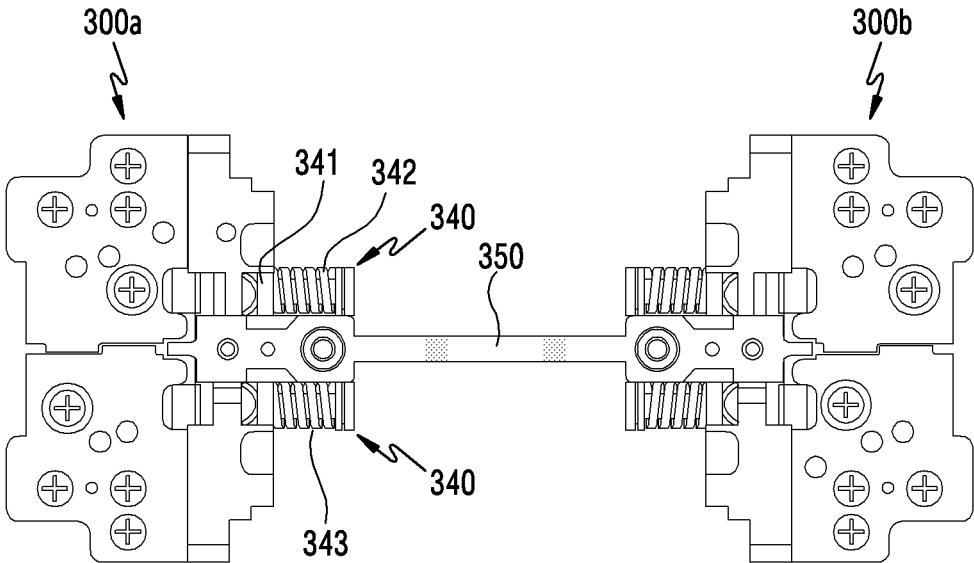


FIG.8B

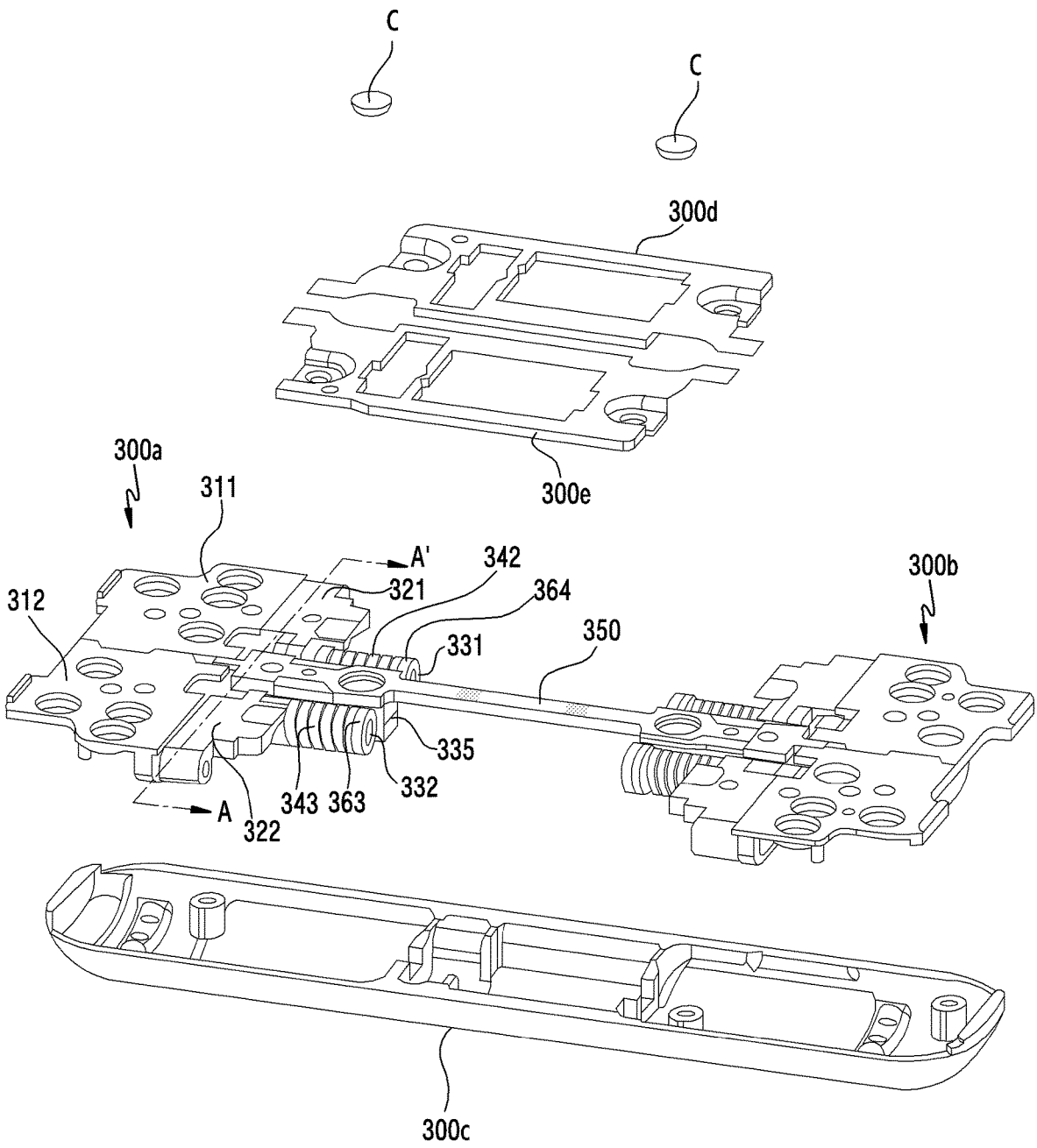


FIG.9

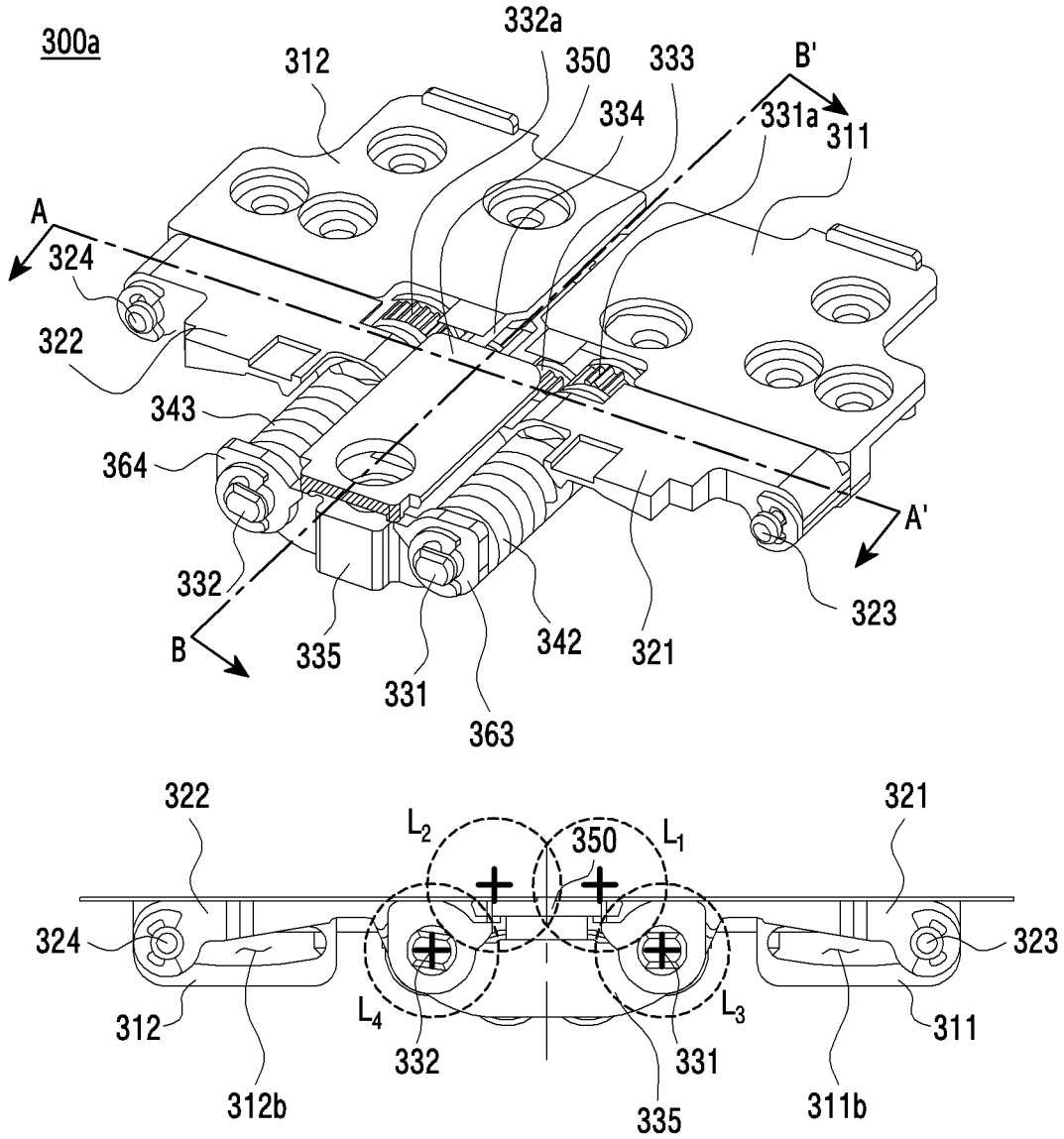


FIG. 10A

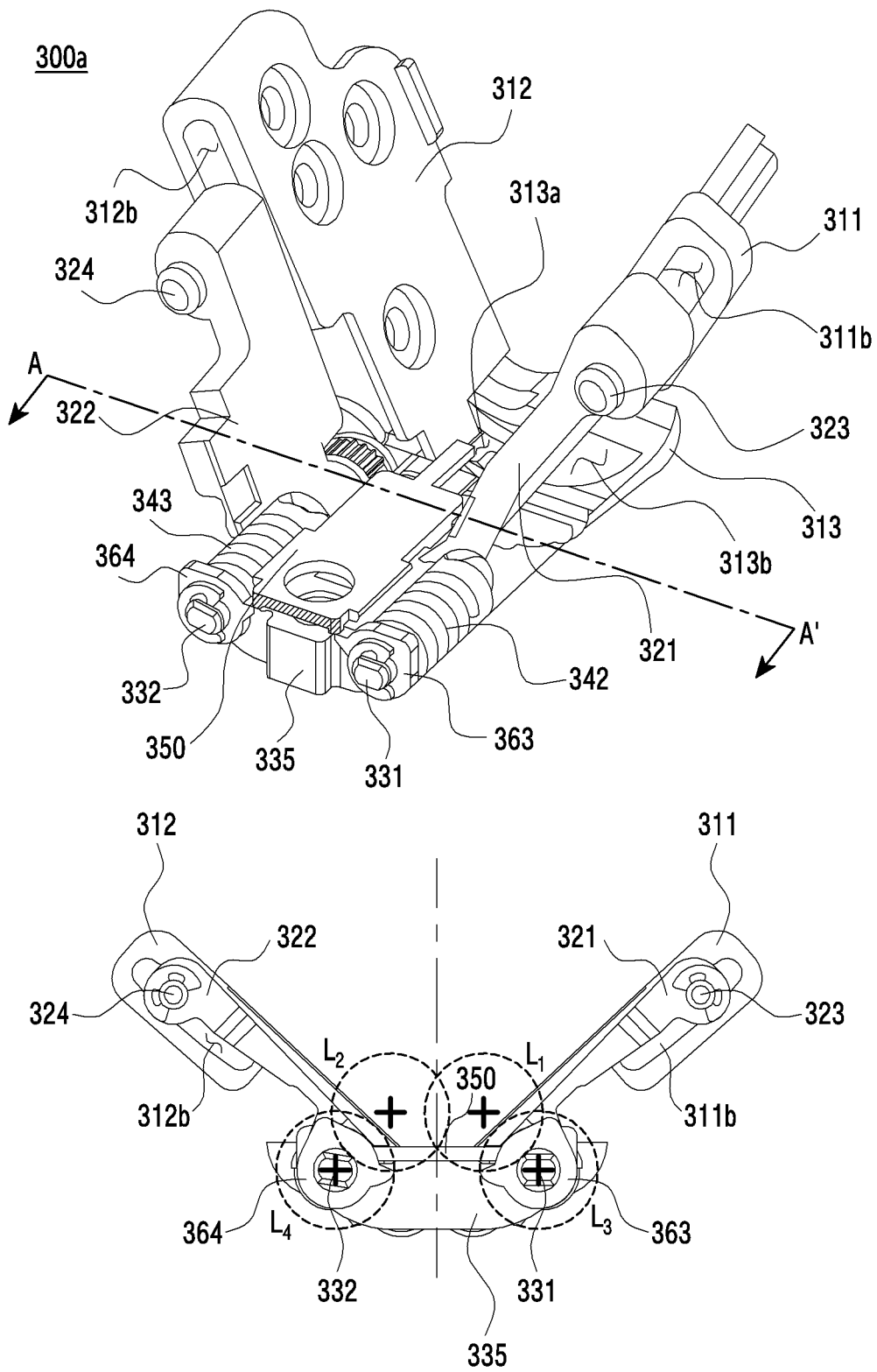


FIG. 10B

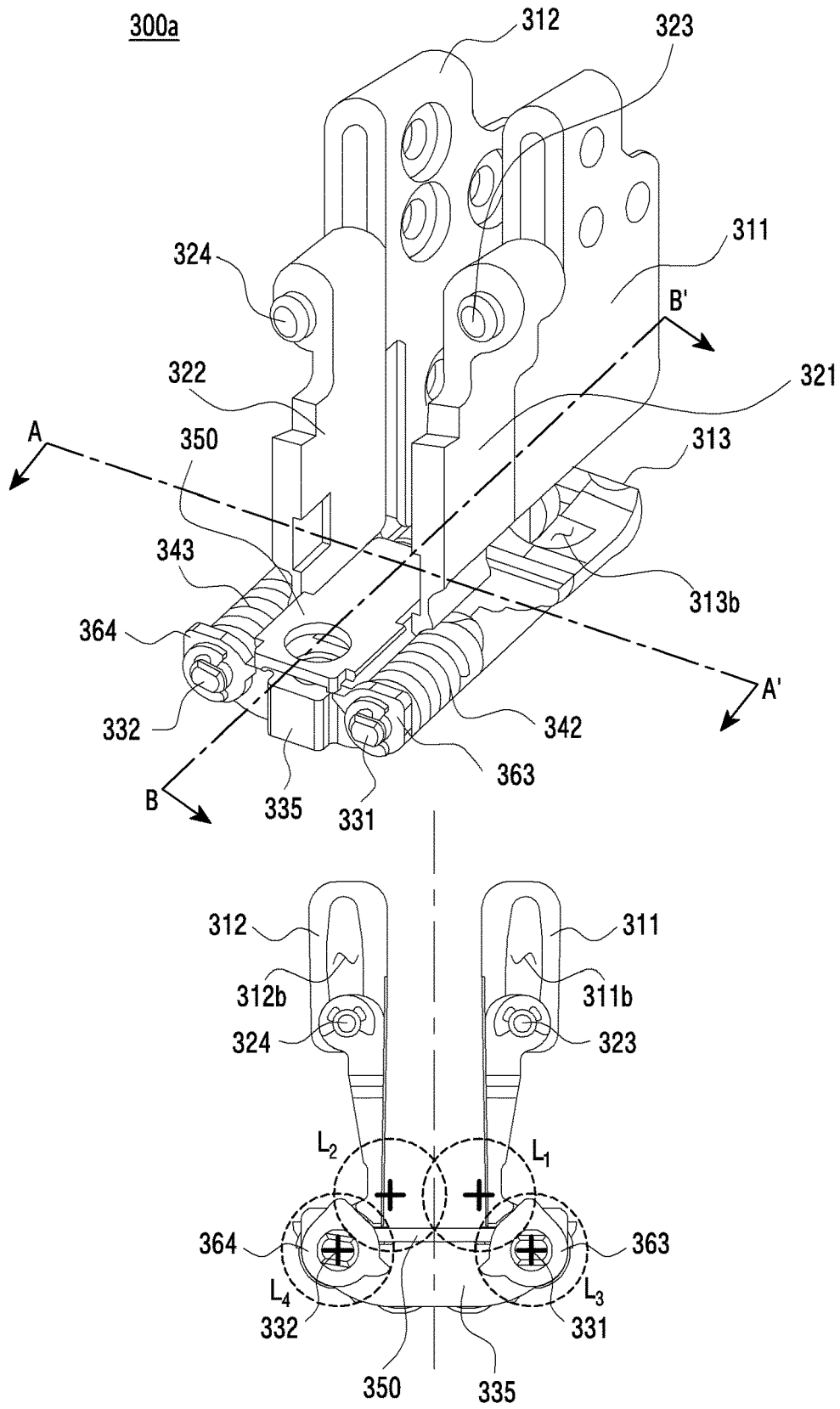


FIG.10C

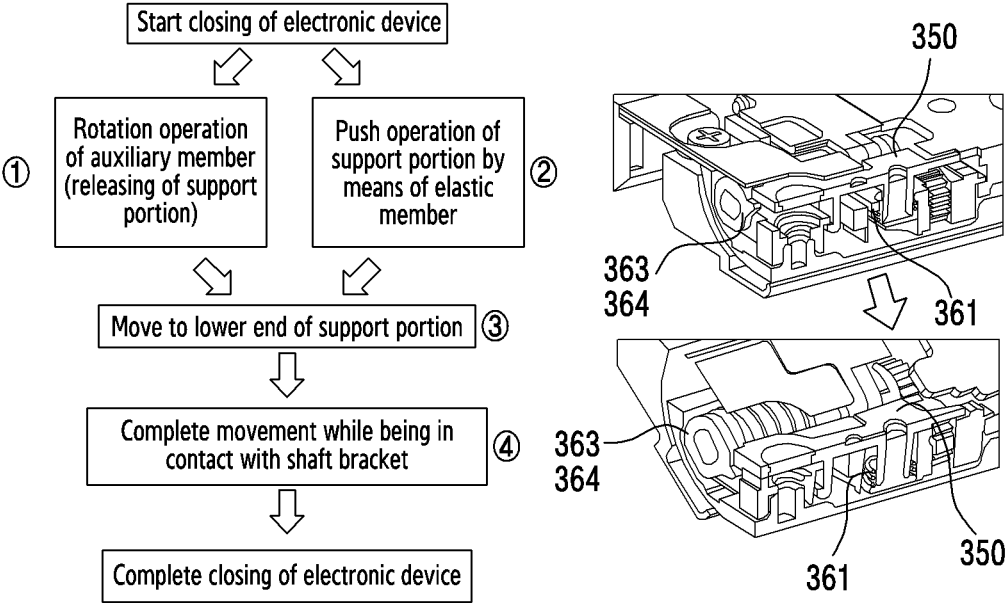


FIG. 10D



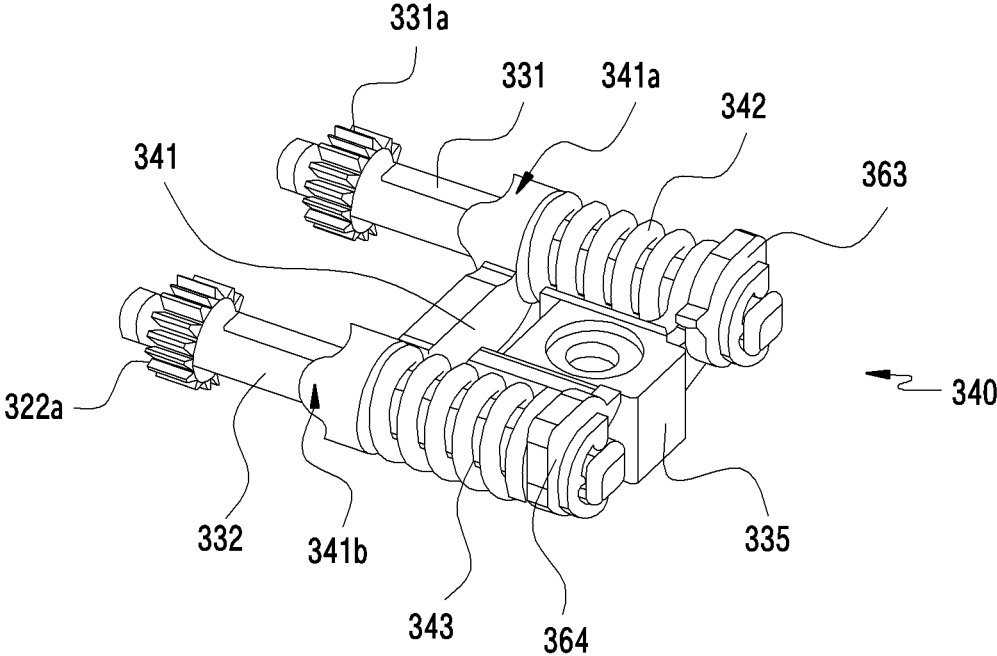


FIG. 11

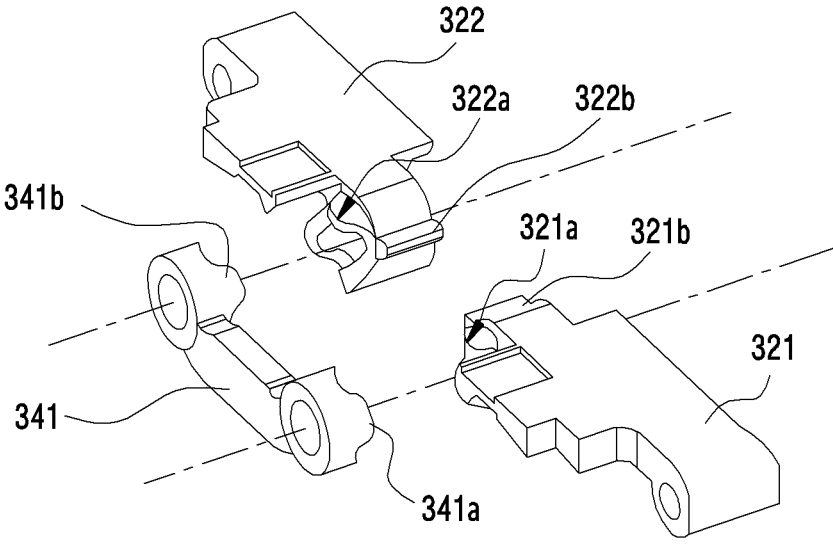


FIG.12A

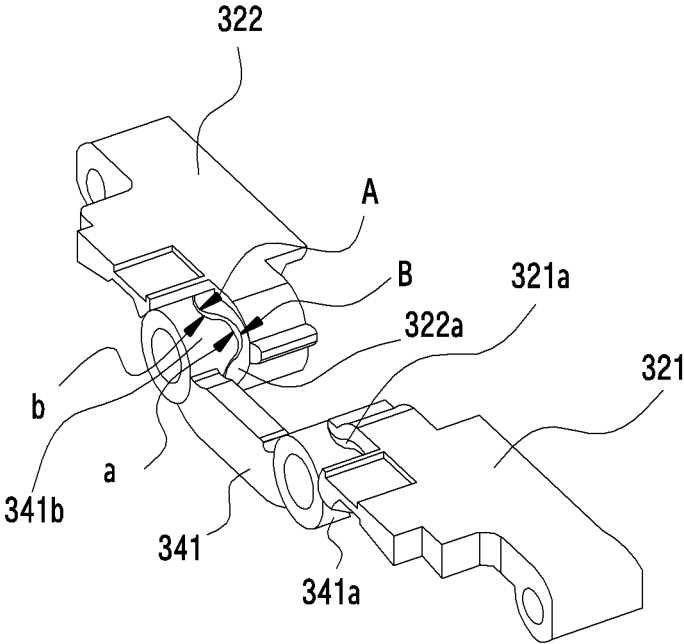


FIG.12B

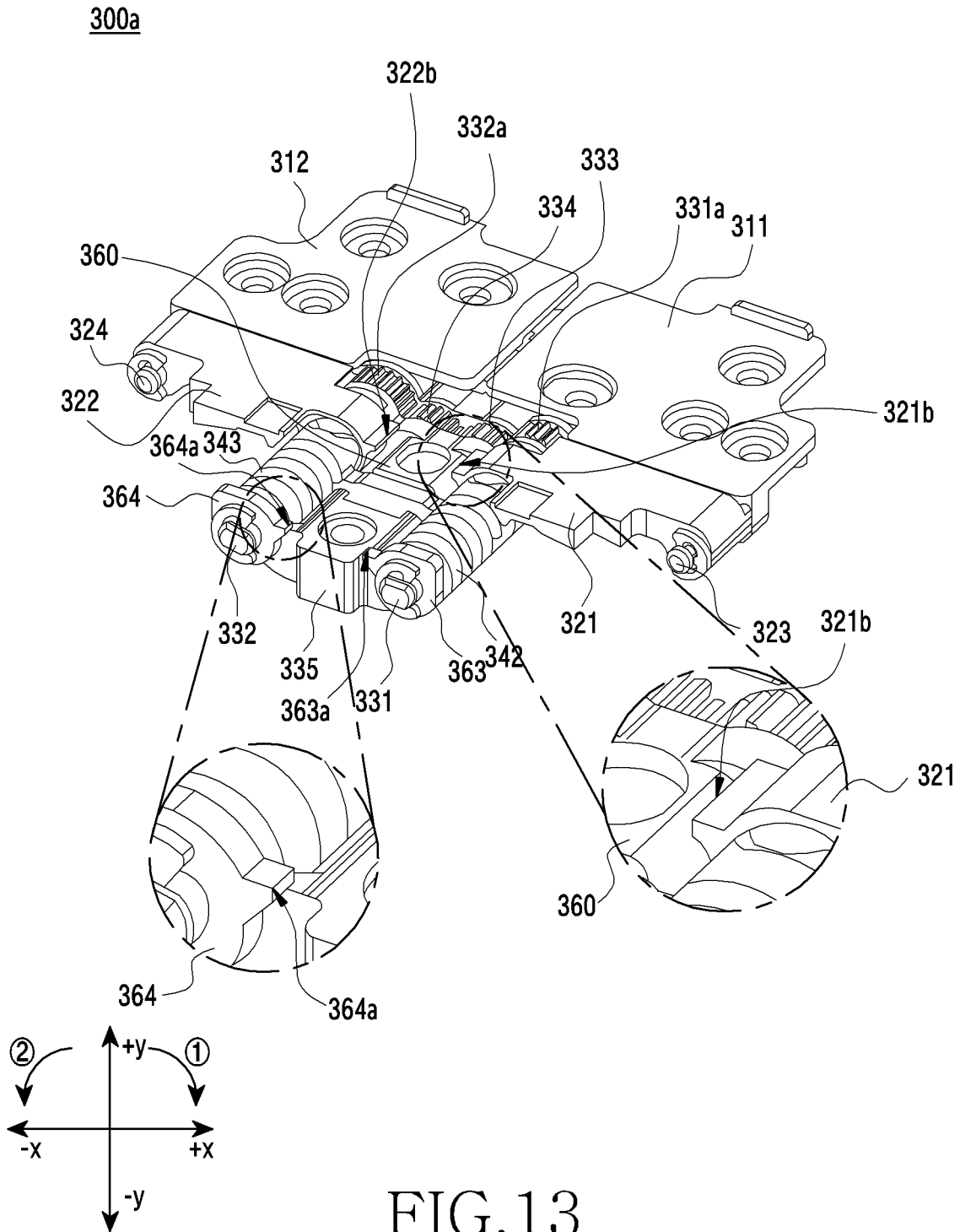


FIG.13

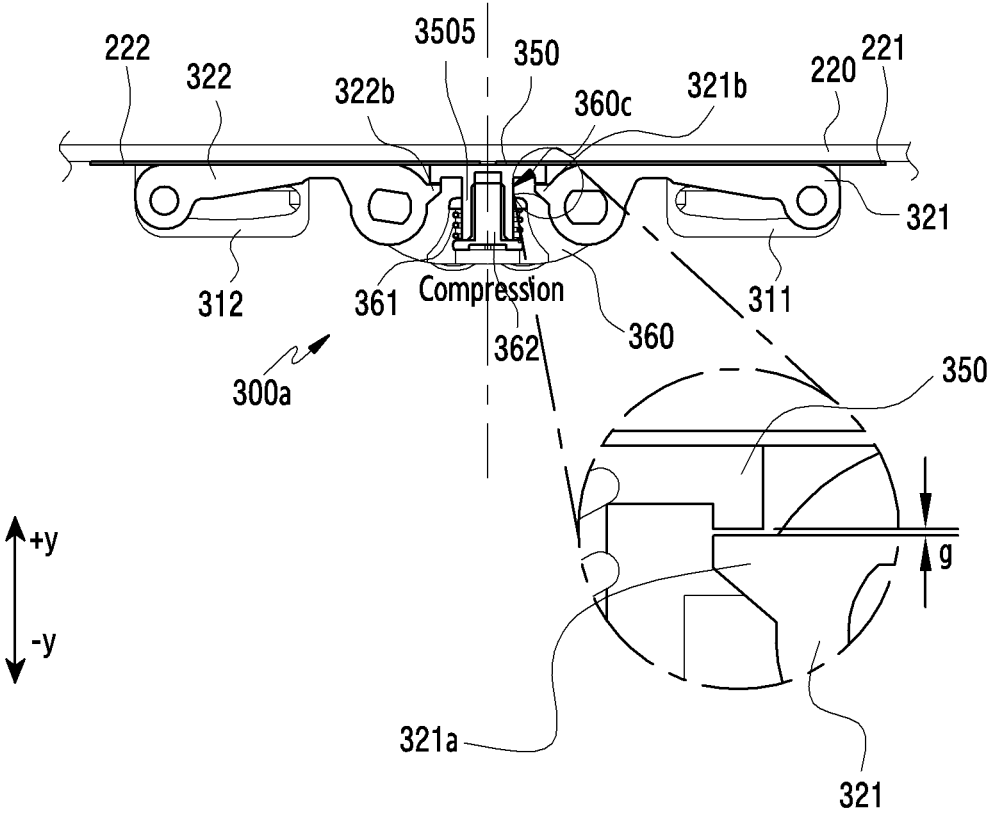


FIG.14A

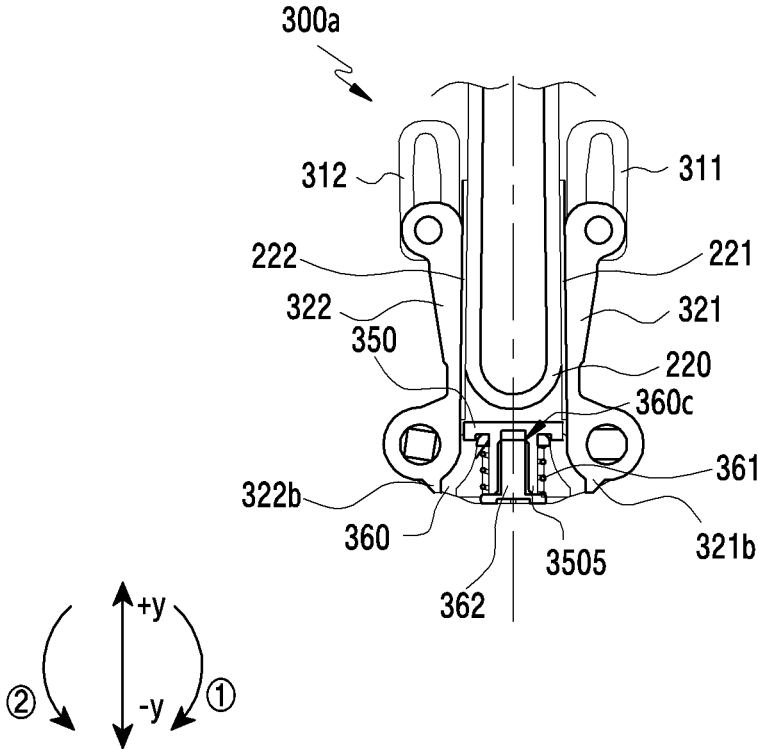


FIG.14B

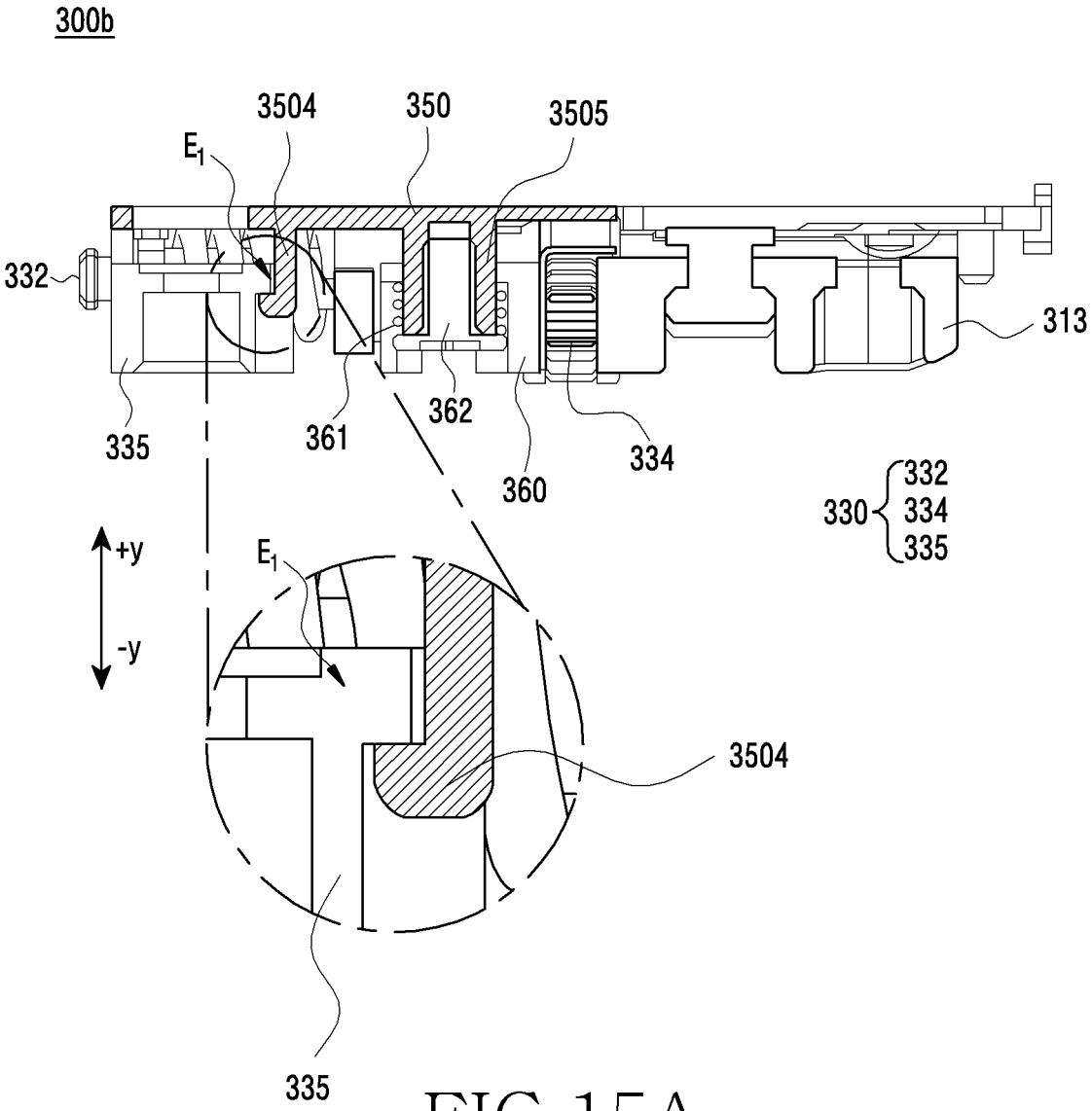


FIG. 15A

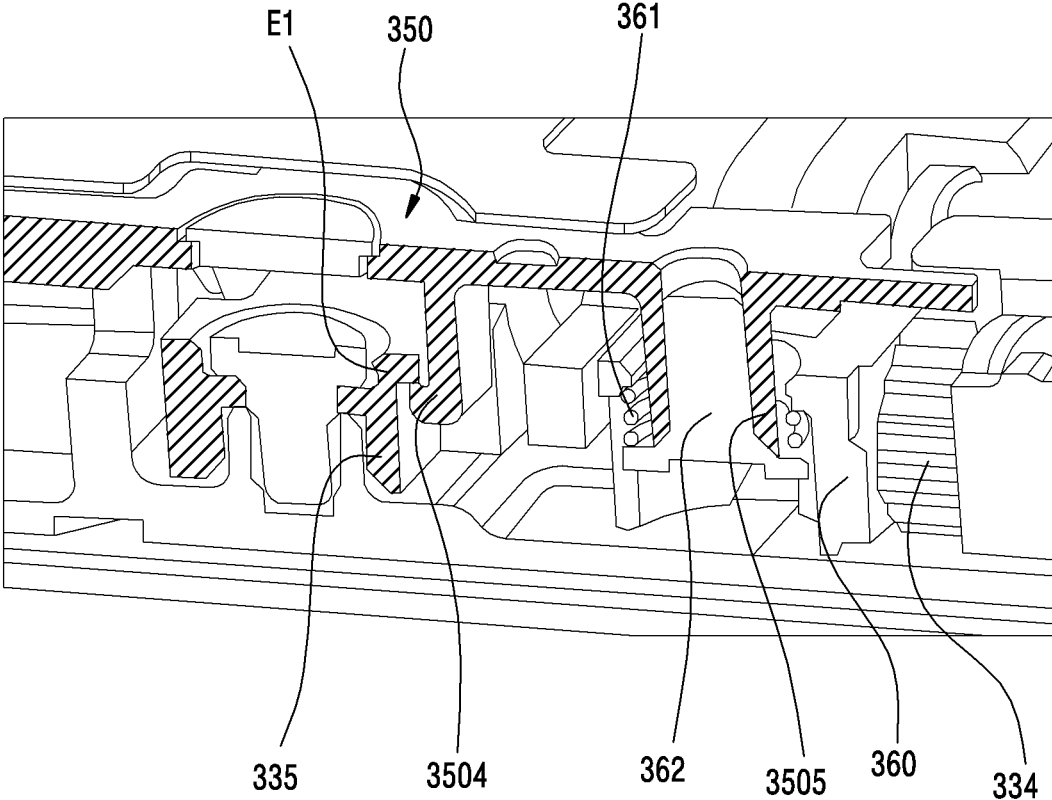


FIG. 15B



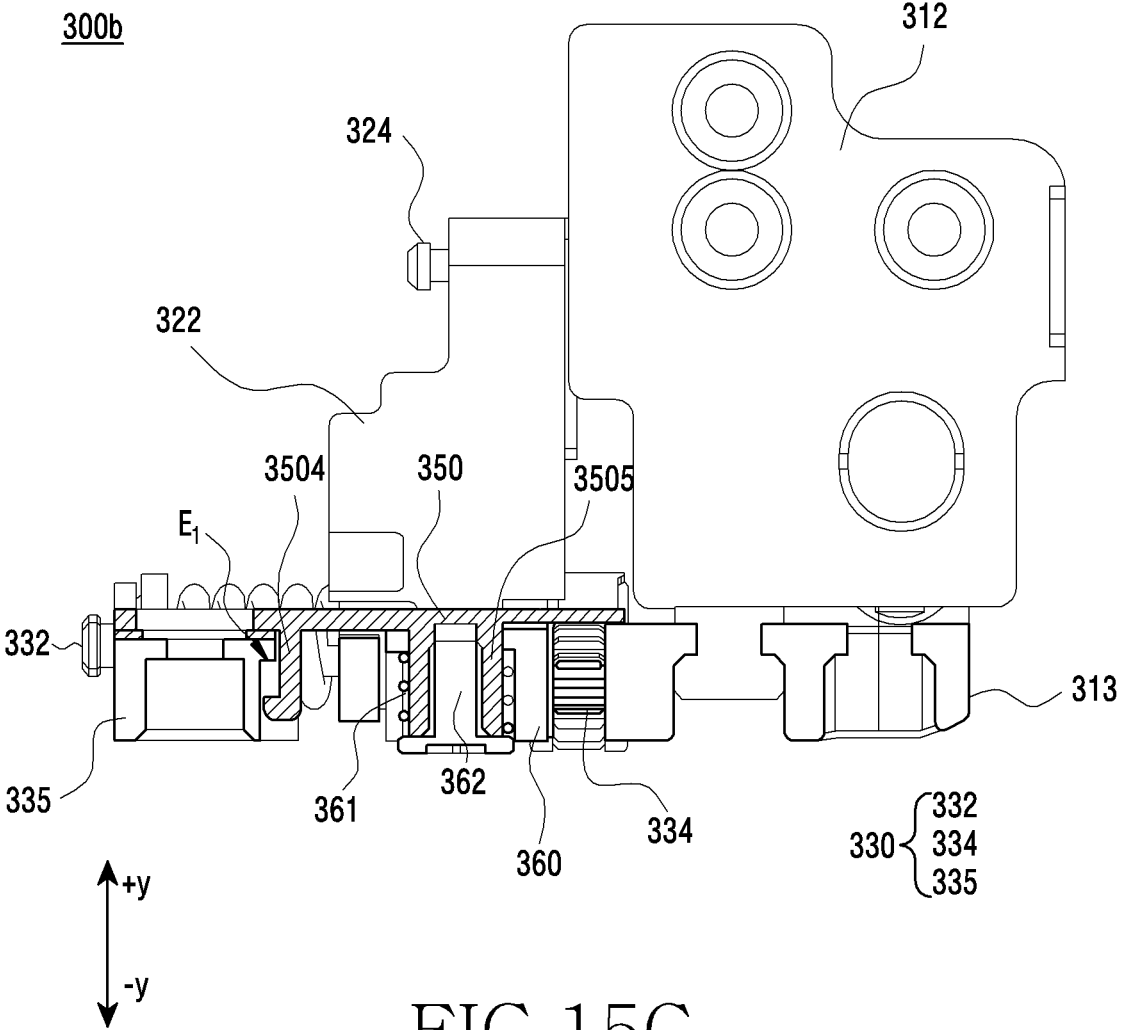


FIG. 15C

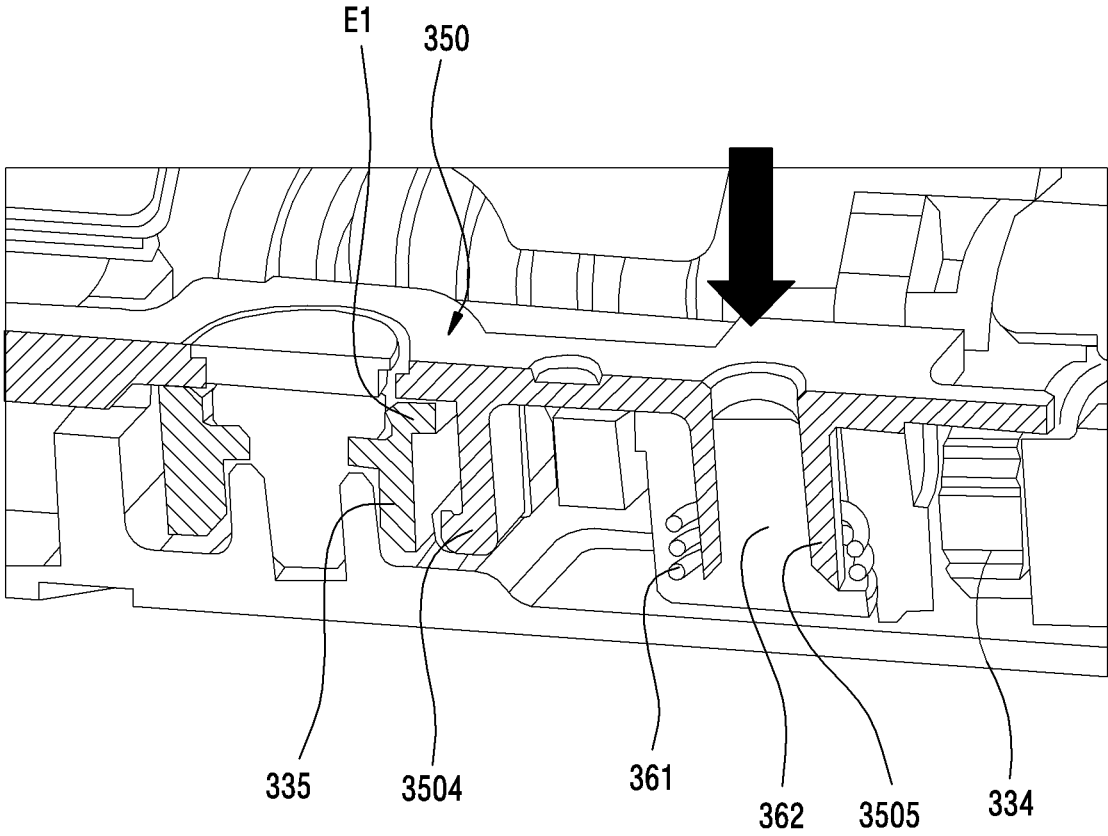


FIG.15D

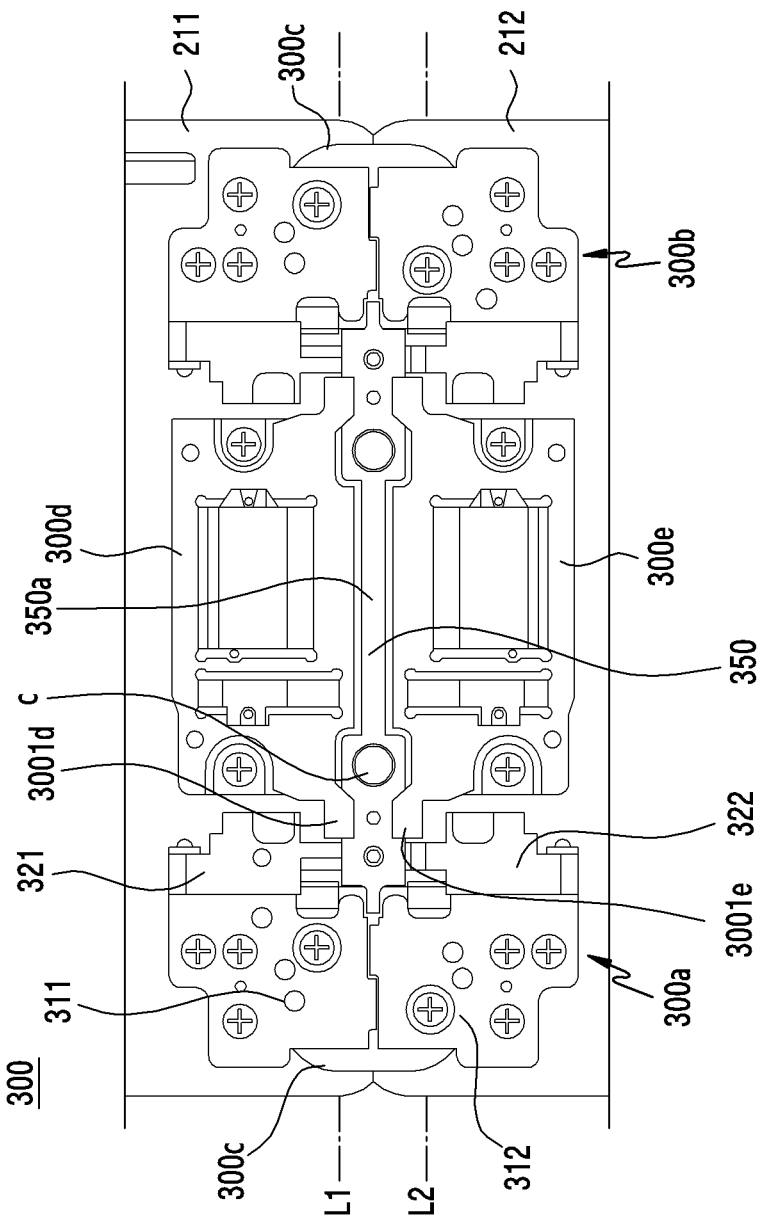


FIG.16

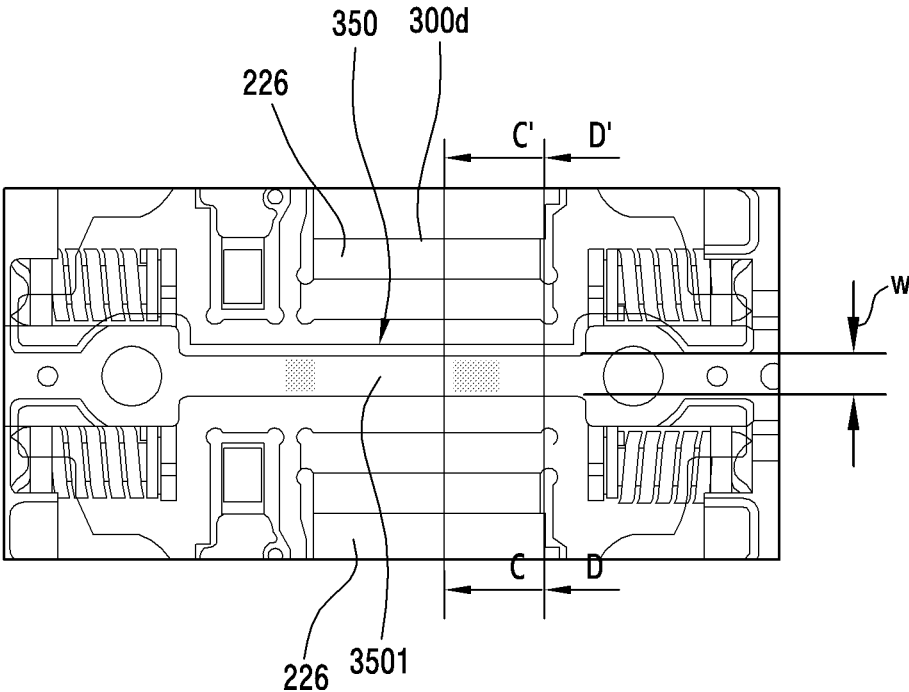


FIG.17A

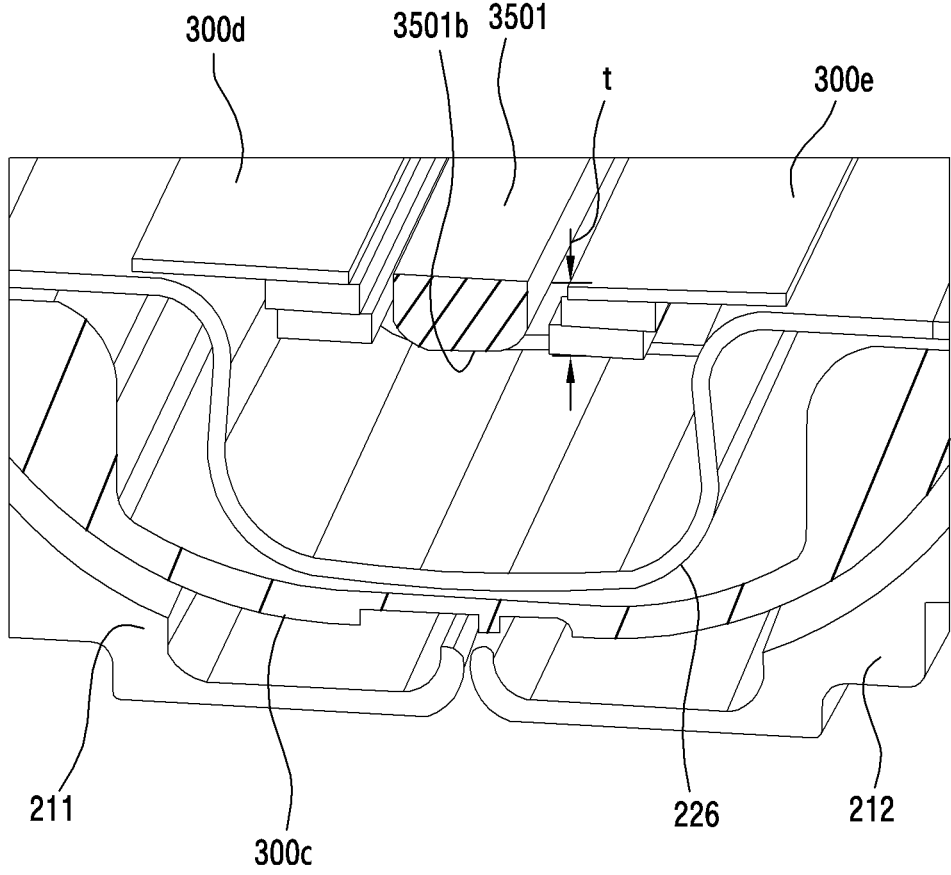


FIG.17B

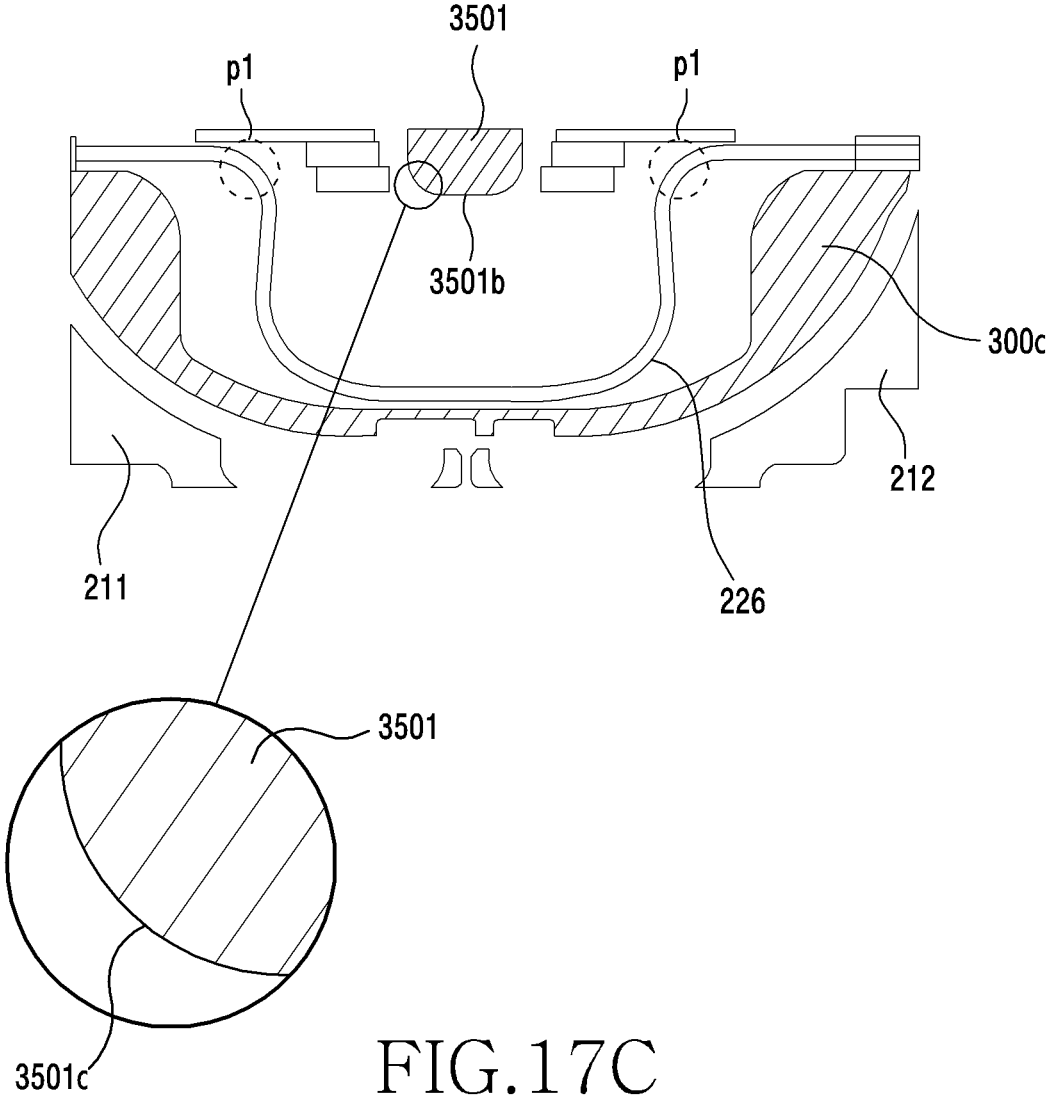


FIG.17C

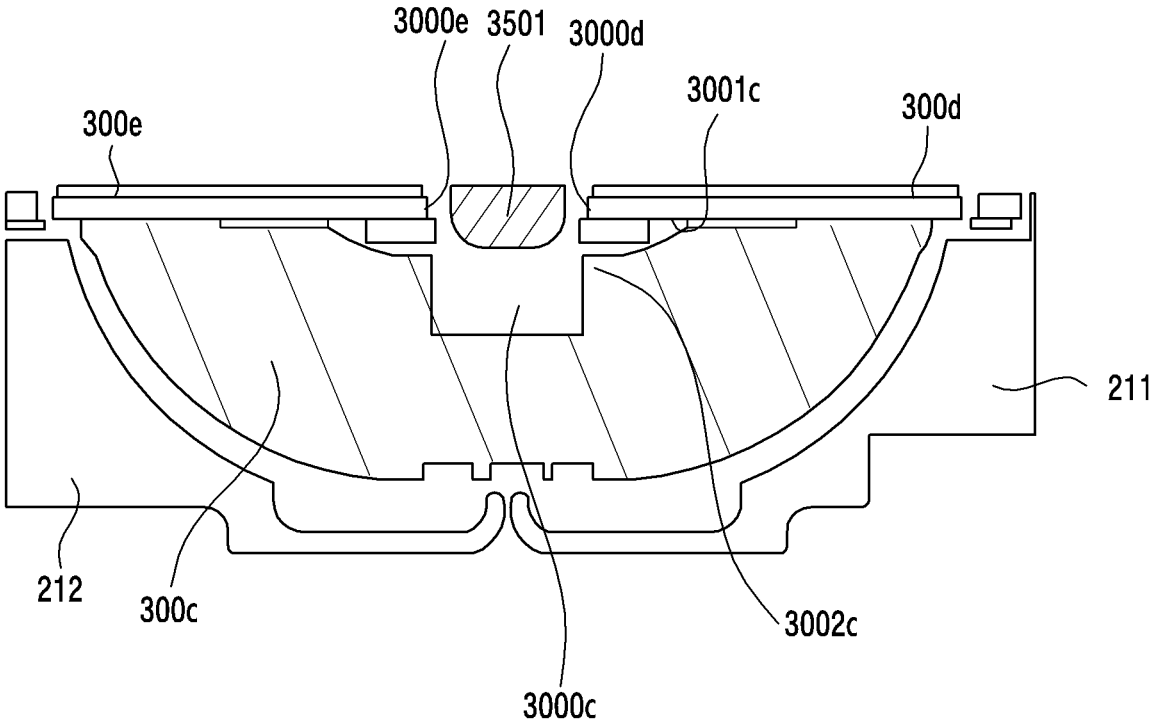


FIG.18

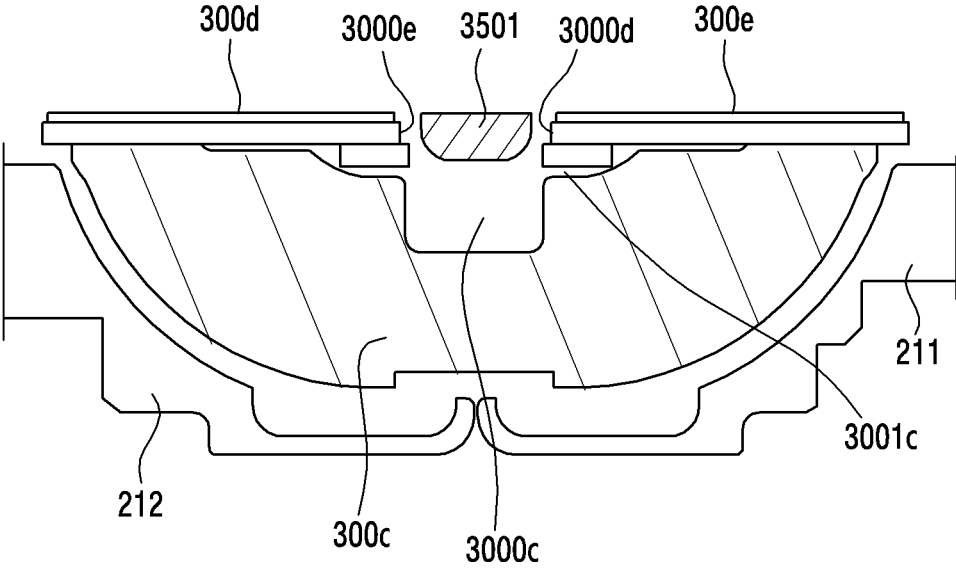


FIG.19A



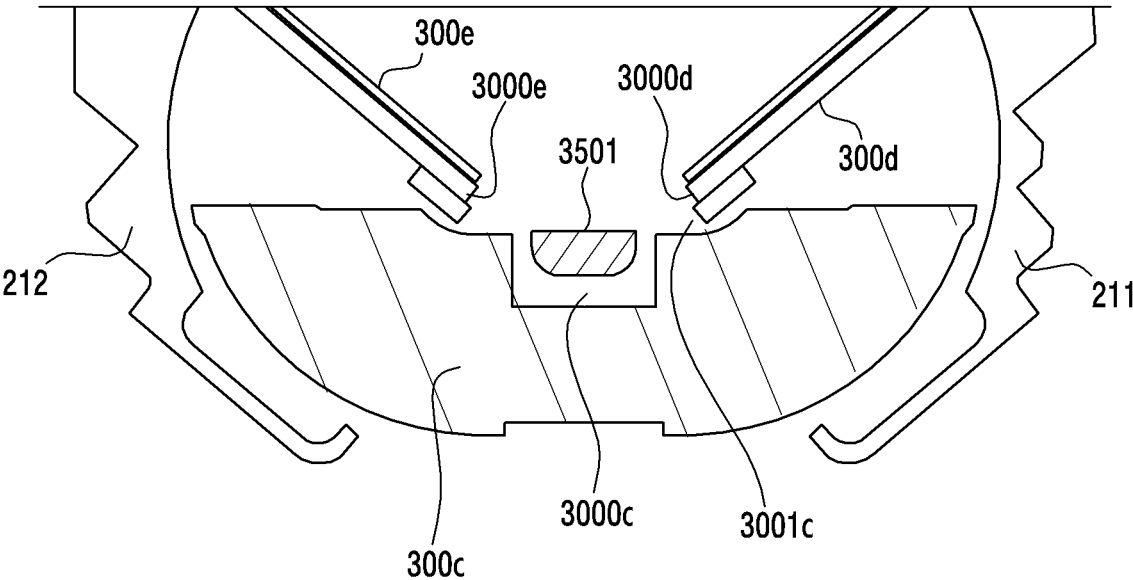


FIG.19B

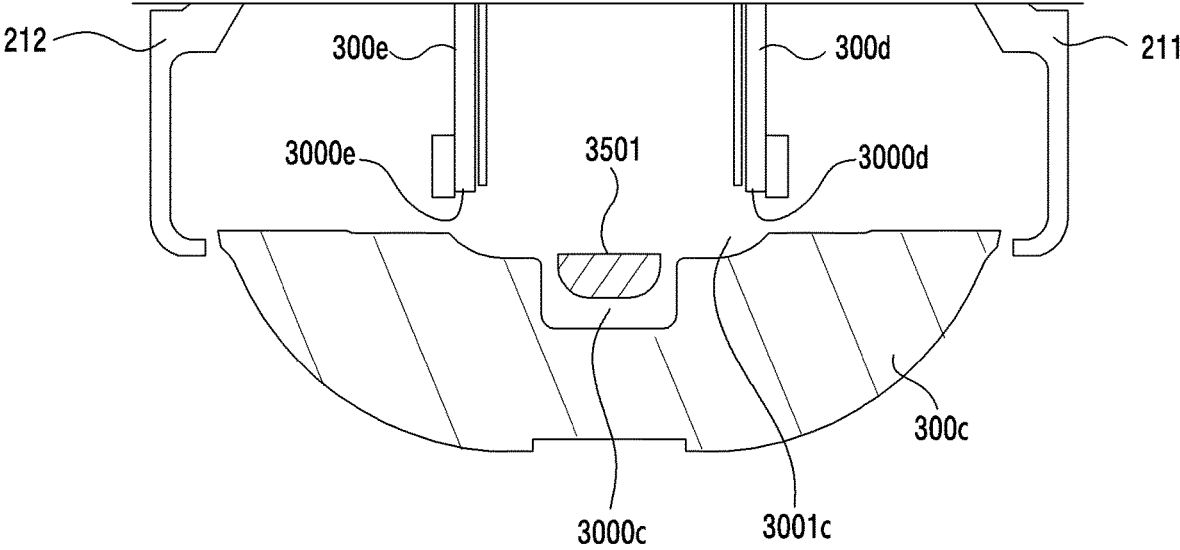


FIG.19C

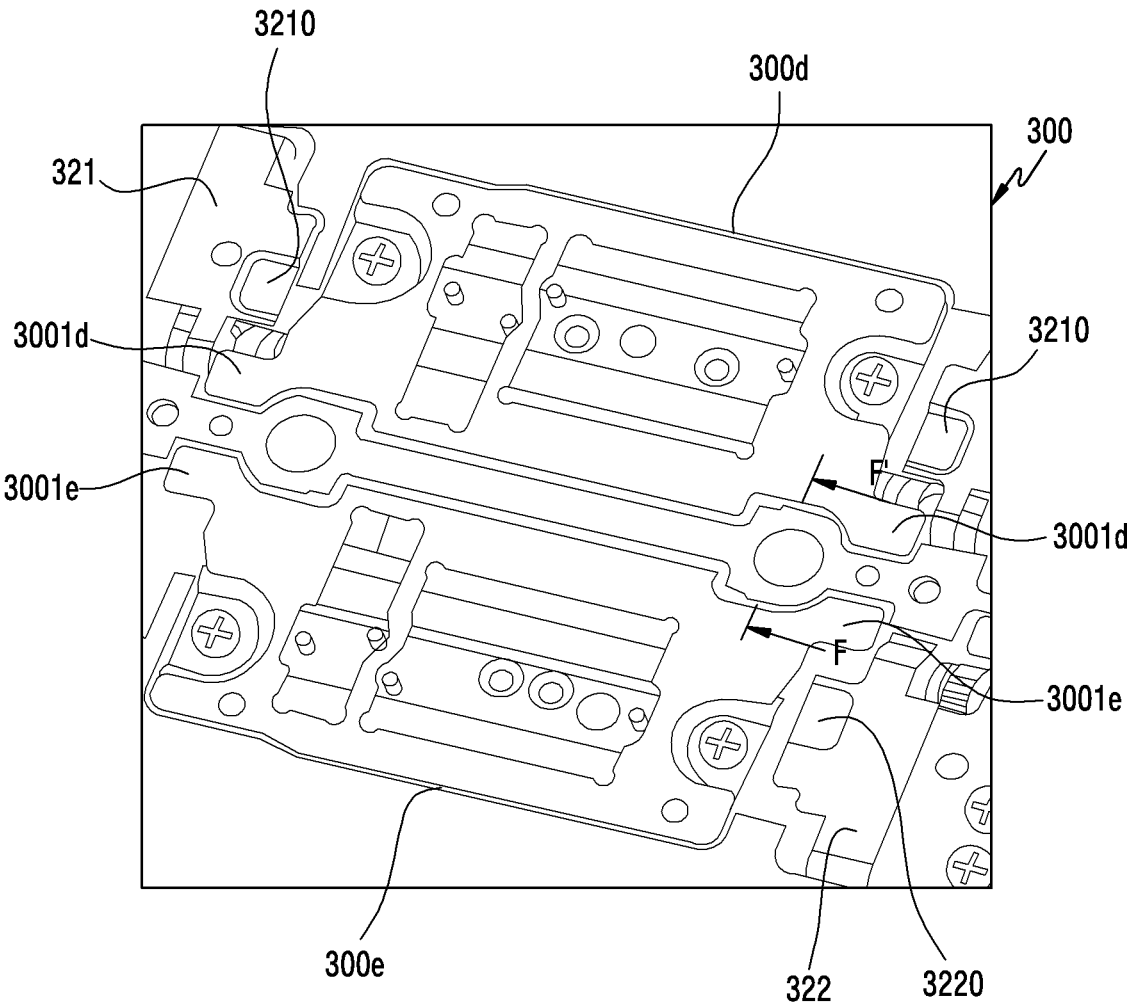


FIG. 20A

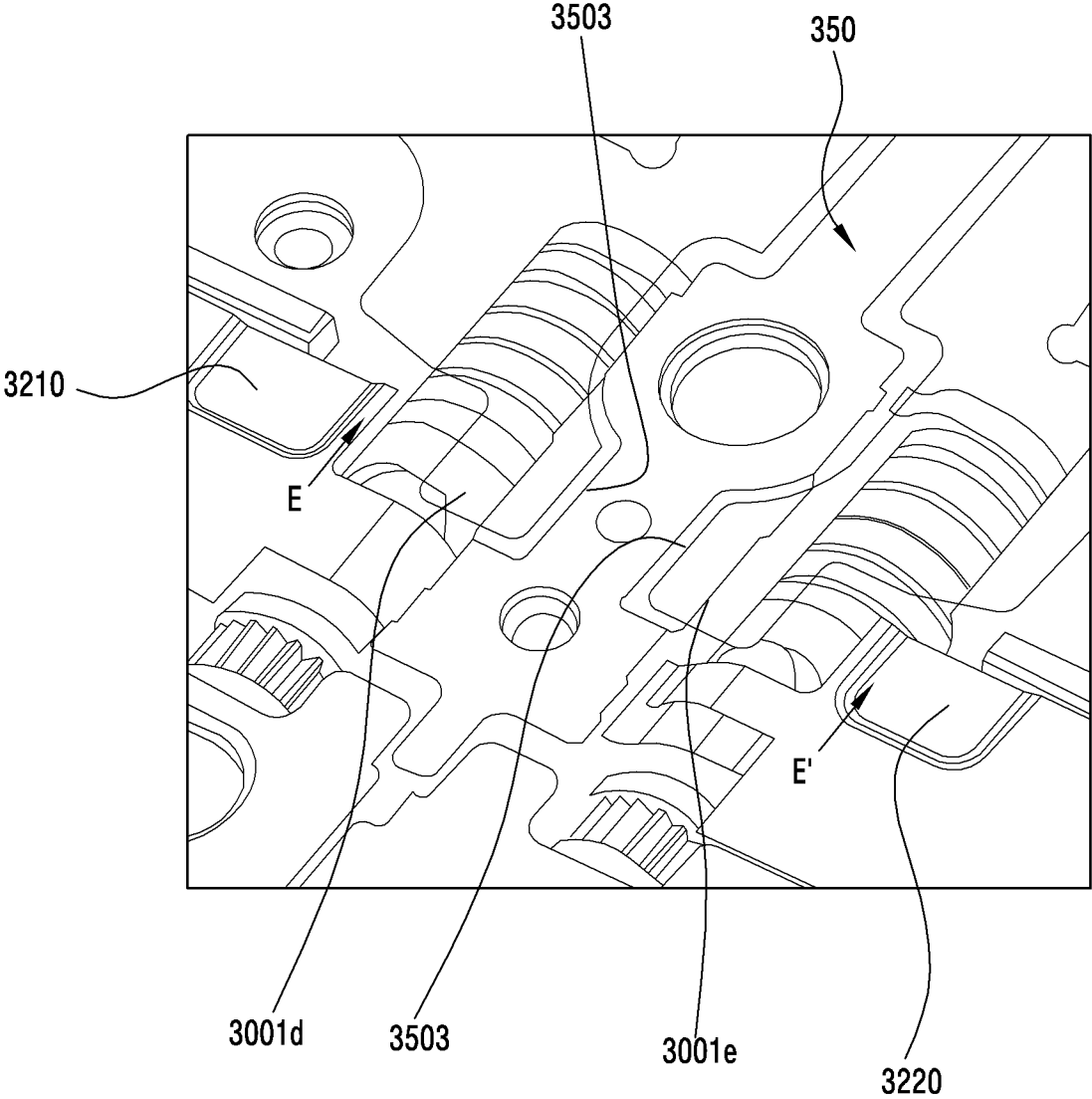


FIG. 20B

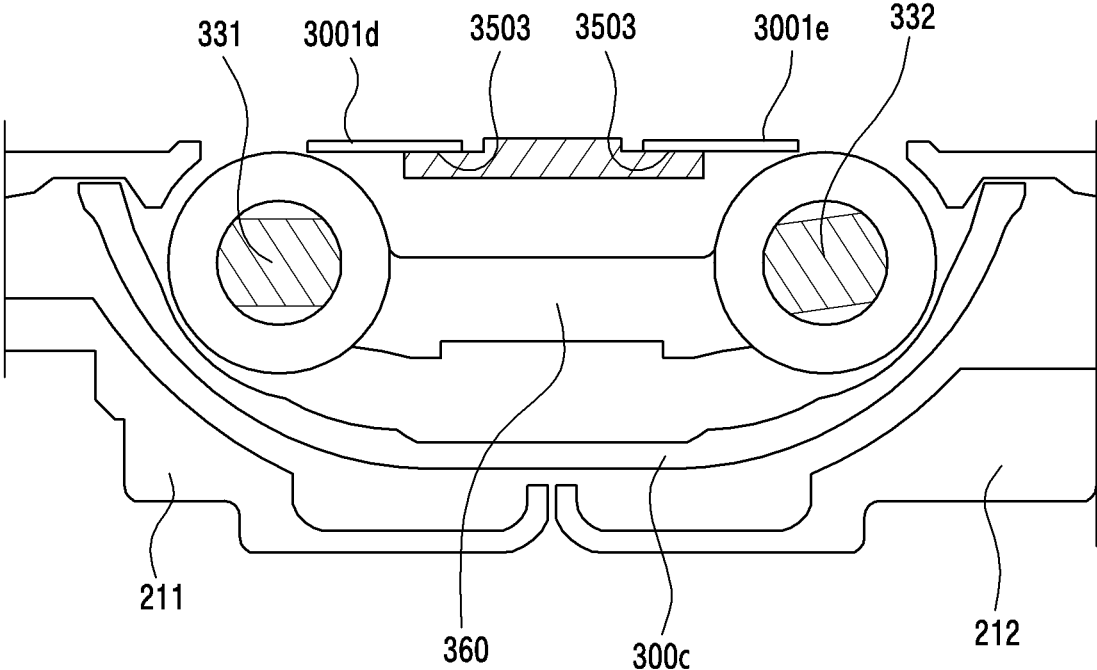


FIG.20C

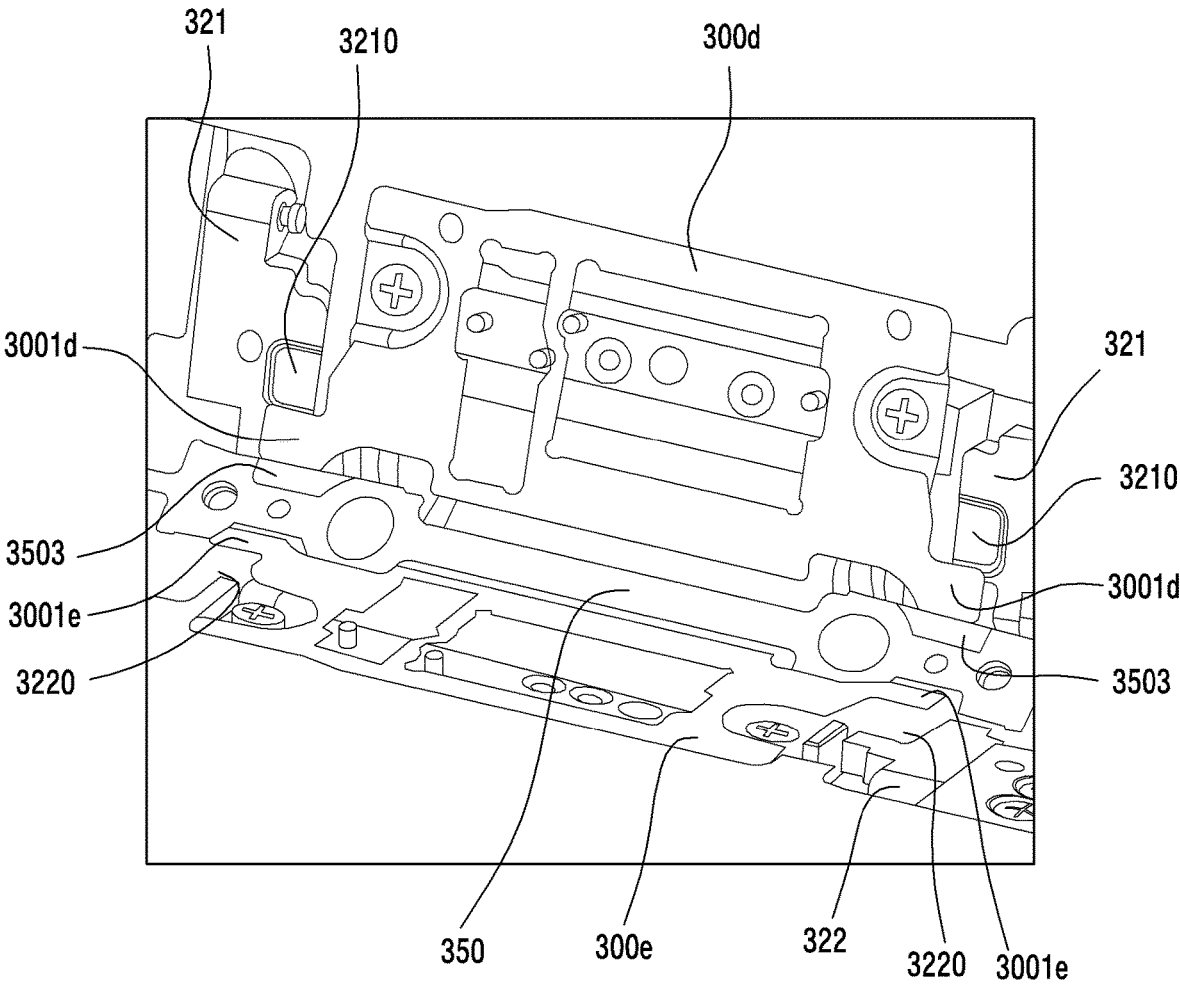


FIG.20D

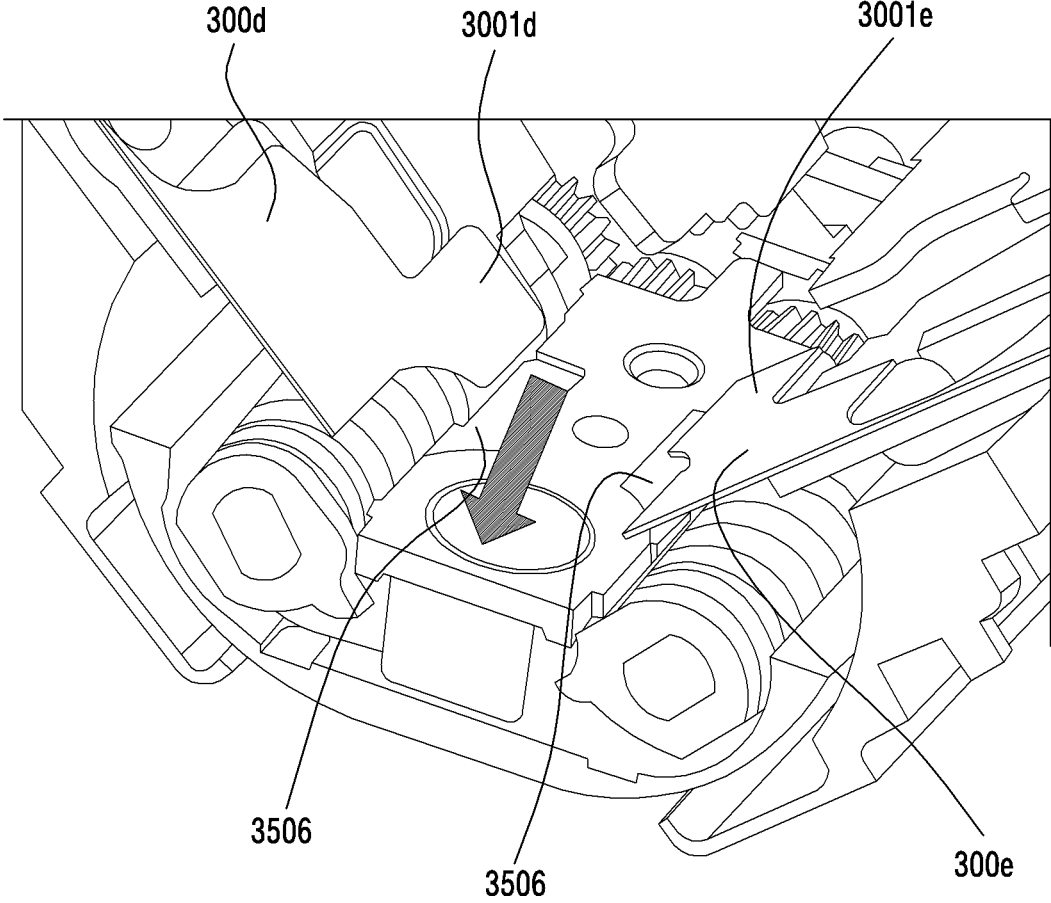


FIG. 20E

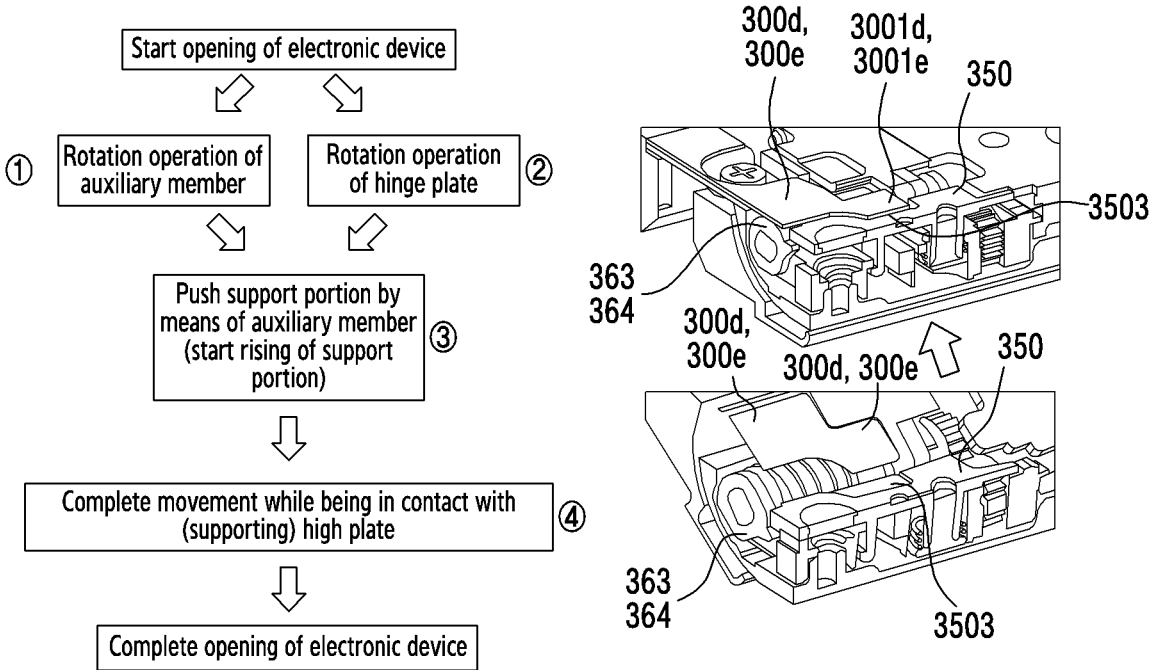


FIG. 20F



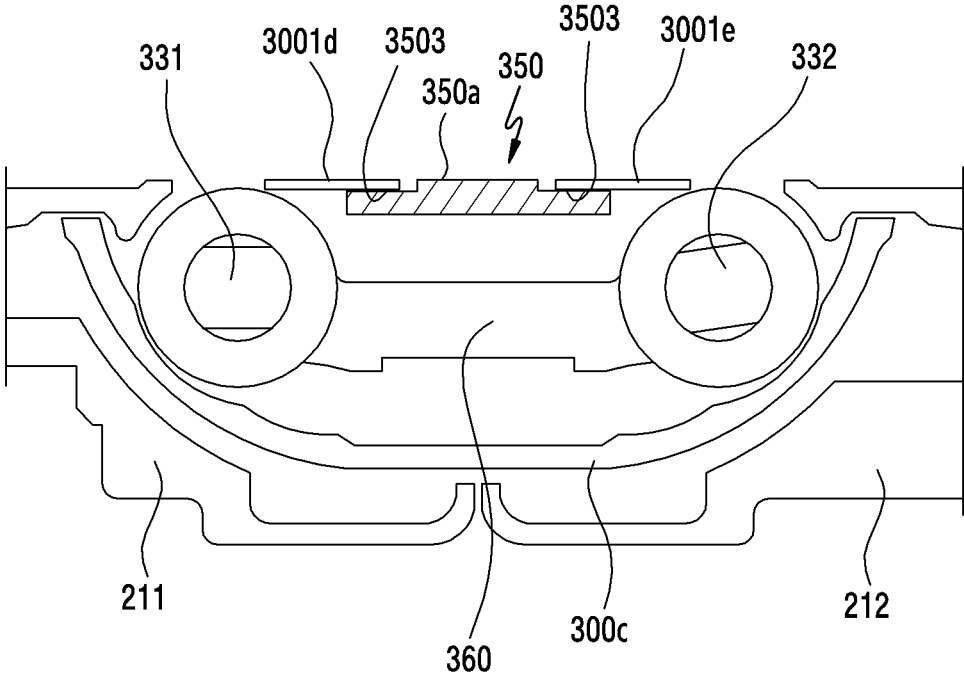


FIG.21A

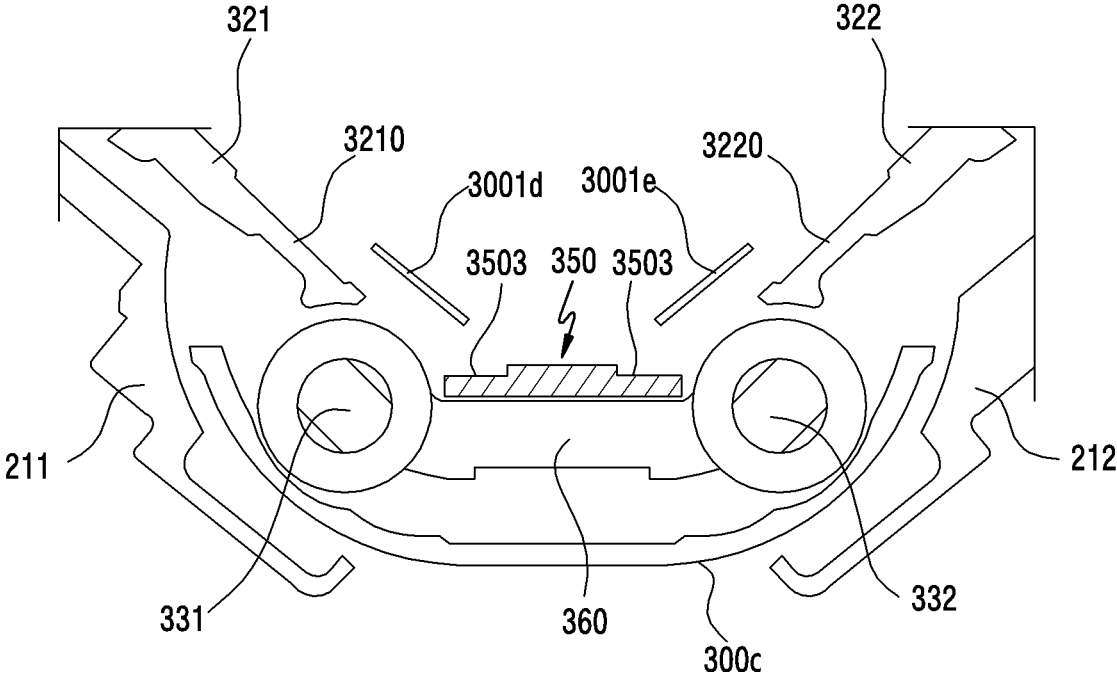


FIG.21B

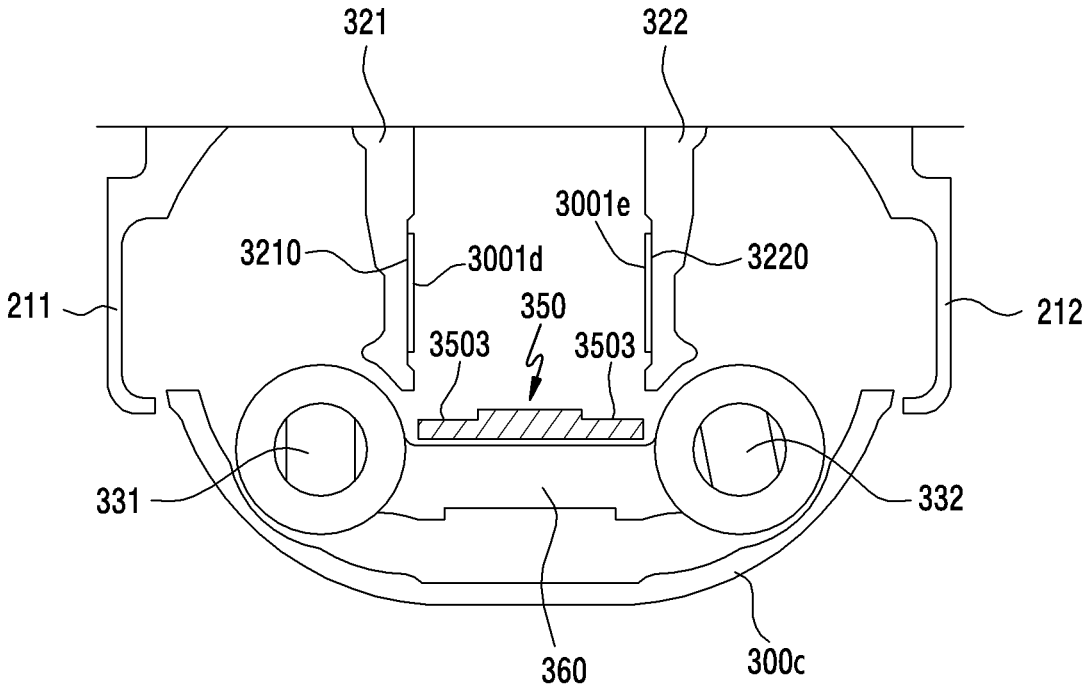


FIG.21C

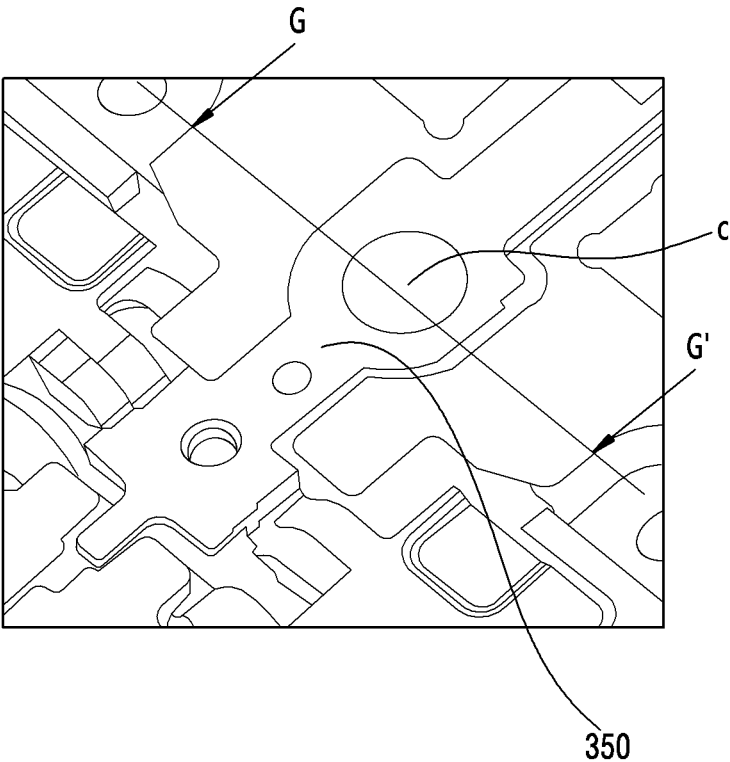


FIG.22A

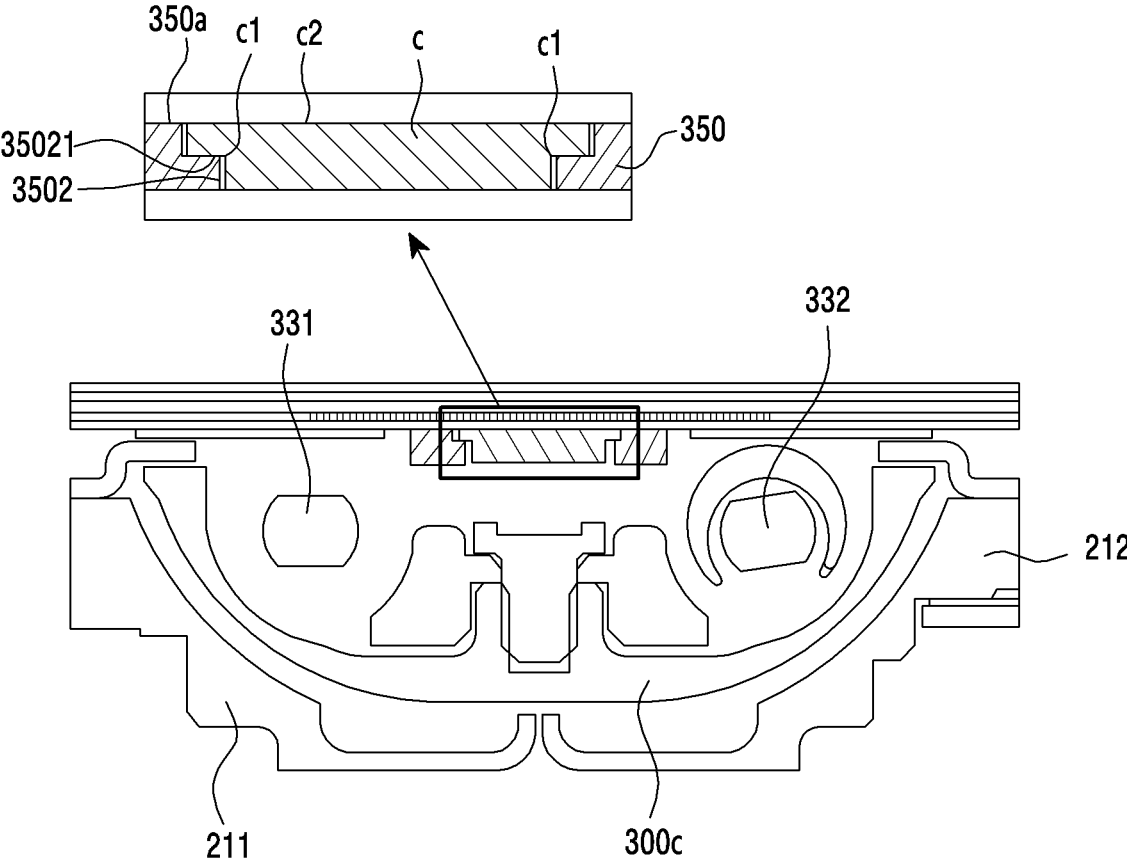


FIG. 22B

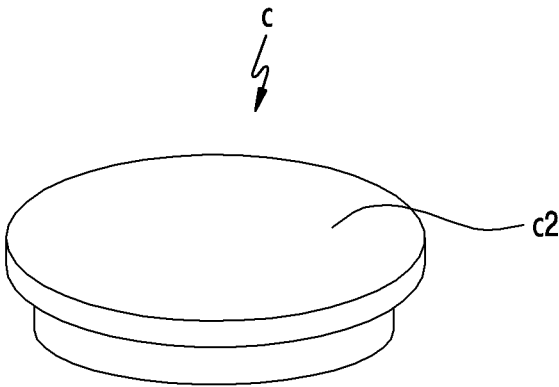


FIG.22C

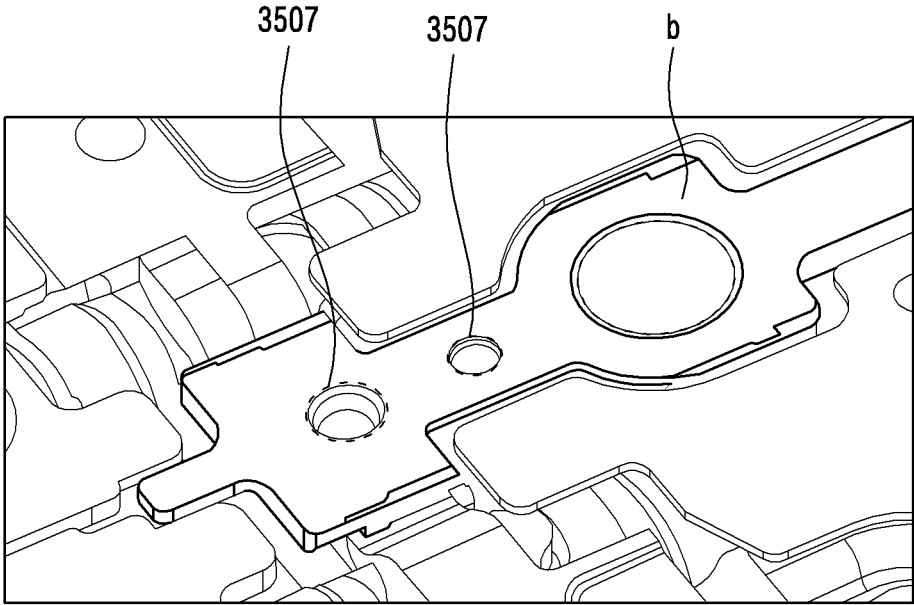


FIG.23A

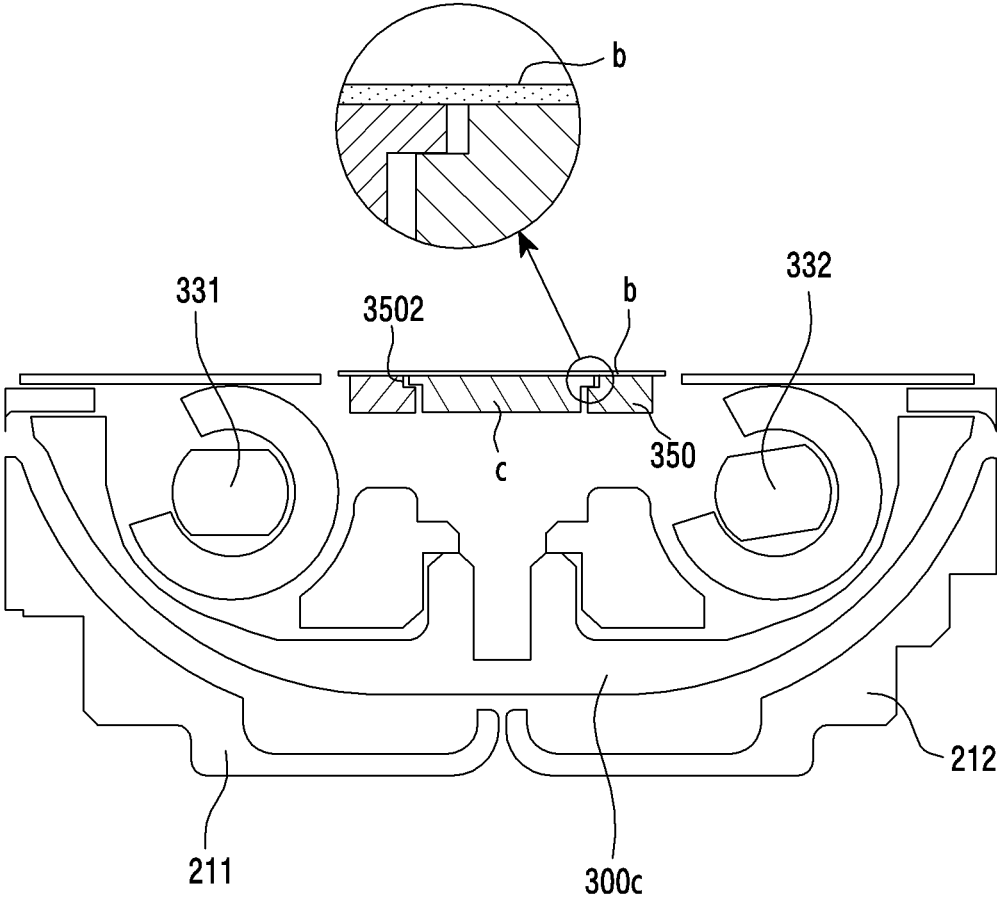


FIG. 23B



**FOLDABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE  
INCLUDING HINGE ASSEMBLY****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
APPLICATION(S)**

**[0001]** This application is a Continuation Application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/125,493, filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) on Mar. 23, 2023, which is a Continuation Application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/172,768, filed in the USPTO on Feb. 10, 2021, issued as U.S. Pat. No. 11,625,073 on Apr. 11, 2023, and is based on and claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Korean Patent Application No. 10-2020-0015993, which was filed in the Korean Intellectual Property Office on Feb. 10, 2020, the entire disclosure of each of which is incorporated herein by reference.

**BACKGROUND****1. Field**

**[0002]** The disclosure relates generally to a foldable electronic device including a hinge assembly.

**2. Description of Related Art**

**[0003]** Electronic devices have been developed in a portable or wearable manner to improve mobility and accessibility. The electronic devices have evolved to be lighter and thinner for ease of portability, and for convenience of use. For example, a foldable electronic device having a flexible display provides a relatively larger screen than a general bar-type electronic device, but decreases in size when folded, thereby improving portability.

**[0004]** A foldable electronic device may include a flexible display and a plurality of housings. The plurality of housings and the flexible display may be coupled by a hinge assembly, allowing the housings to rotate within a designated range according to a user's manipulation. Through a process of rotating the plurality of housings, the electronic device may transition from a folded state to an unfolded state or may transition from the unfolded state to the folded state.

**[0005]** However, some regions of the flexible display may not be supported by the hinge assembly. Therefore, the some regions of the flexible display may sag, or may be damaged due to sagging.

**SUMMARY**

**[0006]** The disclosure is provided to address at least the problems and/or disadvantages described above and to provide at least the advantages described below.

**[0007]** An aspect of the disclosure is to provide a support structure capable of safely supporting a flexible display to prevent the flexible display from sagging or being damaged due to sagging.

**[0008]** Another aspect of the disclosure is to provide a support structure capable of safely supporting a flexible display when an electronic device is in an unfolded state, without affecting a driving trajectory of the flexible display.

**[0009]** Another aspect of the disclosure is to provide a support structure capable of preventing a flexible display from being damaged and improving flatness of the flexible display.

**[0010]** In accordance with an aspect of the disclosure, an electronic device is provided, which includes a first housing

including at least one first electronic component, a second housing including at least one second electronic component, a hinge housing disposed between the first housing and the second housing, a hinge structure configured to rotatably couple the first housing and the second housing, a flexible printed circuit board electrically coupling the first electronic component and the second electronic component via the hinge housing, a flexible display disposed from at least one region of the first housing to at least one region of the second housing across the hinge structure, a first hinge plate coupled to the first housing and moving as the first housing moves, and a second hinge plate coupled to the second housing and moving as the second housing moves, wherein the hinge structure comprises a support portion located between the flexible printed circuit board and the flexible display, wherein, in an unfolded state, at least part of the support portion is disposed between the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate, a first bracket coupled to the first housing and rotating as the first housing rotates about a first rotation axis, and a second bracket coupled to the second housing and rotating as the second housing rotates about a second rotation axis, wherein, in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the support portion, the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate support at least one region of the flexible display in a state that the first hinge plate is at least partially supported by a first area of the support portion and the second hinge plate is at least partially supported by a second area of the support portion opposite to the first area, and wherein, in a folded state of the electronic device, the support portion is spaced apart from the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS**

**[0011]** The above and other aspects, features, and advantages of certain embodiments of the disclosure will be more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

**[0012]** FIG. 1 illustrates an electronic device in a network environment according to an embodiment;

**[0013]** FIGS. 2A to 2C illustrate a foldable electronic device in a folded state according to an embodiment;

**[0014]** FIGS. 3A to 3C illustrate a foldable electronic device in a 180-degree unfolded state according to an embodiment;

**[0015]** FIG. 4A illustrates an exploded view of an electronic device in an unfolded state according to an embodiment;

**[0016]** FIG. 4B illustrates an exploded perspective view of an inner structure of an electronic device according to an embodiment;

**[0017]** FIGS. 5A to 5C illustrate a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment;

**[0018]** FIG. 6 illustrates an exploded perspective view of a hinge structure according to an embodiment;

**[0019]** FIG. 7A illustrates a perspective view of a support portion according to an embodiment;

**[0020]** FIG. 7B illustrates a plan view of a support portion according to an embodiment;

**[0021]** FIG. 7C illustrates a lateral view of a support portion according to an embodiment;

**[0022]** FIG. 8A illustrates a hinge assembly fastened to an unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment;

**[0023]** FIG. 8B illustrates a plan view of a hinge structure according to an embodiment;

[0024] FIG. 9 illustrates a perspective view of a hinge structure and a hinge housing that are separated according to an embodiment;

[0025] FIG. 10A illustrates a hinge structure when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment;

[0026] FIG. 10B illustrates a hinge structure when an electronic device rotates from an unfolded state to a folded state according to an embodiment;

[0027] FIG. 10C illustrates a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment;

[0028] FIG. 10D illustrates operations of a support portion when an electronic device rotates from an open state to a closed state according to an embodiment;

[0029] FIG. 11 illustrates a fixing portion and a detent structure of a hinge structure according to an embodiment;

[0030] FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate a coupling relationship between an arm structure and a detent structure of a hinge structure according to an embodiment;

[0031] FIG. 13 illustrates an enlarged view of a hinge structure according to an embodiment;

[0032] FIG. 14A illustrates a compressed state of an elastic member and first and second arms of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment;

[0033] FIG. 14B illustrates an elongated state of an elastic member and first and second arms of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment;

[0034] FIG. 15A illustrates a cross-section of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a 180-degree unfolded state according to an embodiment;

[0035] FIG. 15B illustrates a perspective view of a cross-section of a hinge assembly when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment;

[0036] FIG. 15C illustrates a cross-section of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment;

[0037] FIG. 15D illustrates a cross-section of a hinge structure while an electronic device is folded according to an embodiment;

[0038] FIG. 16 illustrates a hinge assembly fastened to an unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment;

[0039] FIG. 17A illustrates a support portion in a mounting state according to an embodiment;

[0040] FIG. 17B illustrates a perspective view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line C-C';

[0041] FIG. 17C illustrates a cross-sectional view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line C-C';

[0042] FIG. 18 illustrates a cross-sectional view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line D-D';

[0043] FIGS. 19A to 19C illustrate a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment.

[0044] FIG. 20A illustrates a mounting state of first and second hinge plates in a 180-degree unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment;

[0045] FIG. 20B illustrates an enlarged view of a protrusion portion mounted to a support groove of FIG. 20A;

[0046] FIG. 20C illustrates a cross-sectional view cut along the line E-E' of FIG. 20B;

[0047] FIG. 20D illustrates a first hinge plate in a folded electronic device according to an embodiment;

[0048] FIG. 20E illustrates a second hinge plate in a folded electronic device according to an embodiment;

[0049] FIG. 20F illustrates operations of a hinge plate when an electronic device rotates from a closed state to an open state according to an embodiment;

[0050] FIGS. 21A to 21C illustrate a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment;

[0051] FIG. 22A illustrates a cap fastened to a fastening portion of a support portion according to an embodiment;

[0052] FIG. 22B illustrates a cross-sectional view of a cap fastened to a fastening portion of a support portion, cut along the line G-G' of FIG. 22A;

[0053] FIG. 22C illustrates a cap according to an embodiment;

[0054] FIG. 23A illustrates tape attached to a first face of a support portion according to an embodiment; and

[0055] FIG. 23B illustrates a cross-sectional view, cut along the line F-F' of FIG. 20A, of tape attached to a first face of a support portion according to an embodiment.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0056] Hereinafter, various embodiments of the disclosure will be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0057] FIG. 1 illustrates an electronic device 101 in a network environment 100 according to an embodiment.

[0058] Referring to FIG. 1, the electronic device 101 in the network environment 100 may communicate with an electronic device 102 via a first network 198 (e.g., a short-range wireless communication network), or at least one of an electronic device 104 or a server 108 via a second network 199 (e.g., a long-range wireless communication network). According to an embodiment, the electronic device 101 may communicate with the electronic device 104 via the server 108. According to an embodiment, the electronic device 101 may include a processor 120, memory 130, an input module 150, a sound output module 155, a display module 160, an audio module 170, a sensor module 176, an interface 177, a connecting terminal 178, a haptic module 179, a camera module 180, a power management module 188, a battery 189, a communication module 190, a subscriber identification module (SIM) 196, or an antenna module 197. In some embodiments, at least one of the components (e.g., the connecting terminal 178) may be omitted from the electronic device 101, or one or more other components may be added in the electronic device 101. In some embodiments, some of the components (e.g., the sensor module 176, the camera module 180, or the antenna module 197) may be implemented as a single component (e.g., the display module 160).

[0059] The processor 120 may execute, for example, software (e.g., a program 140) to control at least one other component (e.g., a hardware or software component) of the electronic device 101 coupled with the processor 120, and may perform various data processing or computation. According to one embodiment, as at least part of the data processing or computation, the processor 120 may store a command or data received from another component (e.g., the sensor module 176 or the communication module 190) in volatile memory 132, process the command or the data stored in the volatile memory 132, and store resulting data in non-volatile memory 134. According to an embodiment, the processor 120 may include a main processor 121 (e.g., a central processing unit (CPU) or an application processor

(AP)), or an auxiliary processor **123** (e.g., a graphics processing unit (GPU), a neural processing unit (NPU), an image signal processor (ISP), a sensor hub processor, or a communication processor (CP)) that is operable independently from, or in conjunction with, the main processor **121**. For example, when the electronic device **101** includes the main processor **121** and the auxiliary processor **123**, the auxiliary processor **123** may be adapted to consume less power than the main processor **121**, or to be specific to a specified function. The auxiliary processor **123** may be implemented as separate from, or as part of the main processor **121**.

**[0060]** The auxiliary processor **123** may control at least some of functions or states related to at least one component (e.g., the display module **160**, the sensor module **176**, or the communication module **190**) among the components of the electronic device **101**, instead of the main processor **121** while the main processor **121** is in an inactive (e.g., sleep) state, or together with the main processor **121** while the main processor **121** is in an active state (e.g., executing an application). According to an embodiment, the auxiliary processor **123** (e.g., an image signal processor or a communication processor) may be implemented as part of another component (e.g., the camera module **180** or the communication module **190**) functionally related to the auxiliary processor **123**.

**[0061]** According to an embodiment, the auxiliary processor **123** (e.g., the neural processing unit) may include a hardware structure specified for artificial intelligence model processing. An artificial intelligence model may be generated by machine learning. Such learning may be performed, e.g., by the electronic device **101** where the artificial intelligence is performed or via a separate server (e.g., the server **108**). Learning algorithms may include, but are not limited to, e.g., supervised learning, unsupervised learning, semi-supervised learning, or reinforcement learning. The artificial intelligence model may include a plurality of artificial neural network layers. The artificial neural network may be a deep neural network (DNN), a convolutional neural network (CNN), a recurrent neural network (RNN), a restricted Boltzmann machine (RBM), a deep belief network (DBN), a bidirectional recurrent deep neural network (BRDNN), a deep Q-network, or a combination of two or more thereof, but is not limited thereto. The artificial intelligence model may, additionally or alternatively, include a software structure other than the hardware structure.

**[0062]** The memory **130** may store various data used by at least one component (e.g., the processor **120** or the sensor module **176**) of the electronic device **101**. The various data may include, for example, software (e.g., the program **140**) and input data or output data for a command related thereto. The memory **130** may include the volatile memory **132** or the non-volatile memory **134**.

**[0063]** The program **140** may be stored in the memory **130** as software, and may include, for example, an operating system (OS) **142**, middleware **144**, or an application **146**.

**[0064]** The input module **150** may receive a command or data to be used by another component (e.g., the processor **120**) of the electronic device **101**, from the outside (e.g., a user) of the electronic device **101**. The input module **150** may include, for example, a microphone, a mouse, a keyboard, a key (e.g., a button), or a digital pen (e.g., a stylus pen).

**[0065]** The sound output module **155** may output sound signals to the outside of the electronic device **101**. The sound output module **155** may include, for example, a speaker or a receiver. The speaker may be used for general purposes, such as playing multimedia or playing record. The receiver may be used for receiving incoming calls. According to an embodiment, the receiver may be implemented as separate from, or as part of the speaker.

**[0066]** The display module **160** may visually provide information to the outside (e.g., a user) of the electronic device **101**. The display module **160** may include, for example, a display, a hologram device, or a projector and control circuitry to control a corresponding one of the display, hologram device, and projector. According to an embodiment, the display module **160** may include a touch sensor adapted to detect a touch, or a pressure sensor adapted to measure the intensity of force incurred by the touch.

**[0067]** The audio module **170** may convert a sound into an electrical signal and vice versa. According to an embodiment, the audio module **170** may obtain the sound via the input module **150**, or output the sound via the sound output module **155** or a headphone of an external electronic device (e.g., an electronic device **102**) directly (e.g., wiredly) or wirelessly coupled with the electronic device **101**.

**[0068]** The sensor module **176** may detect an operational state (e.g., power or temperature) of the electronic device **101** or an environmental state (e.g., a state of a user) external to the electronic device **101**, and then generate an electrical signal or data value corresponding to the detected state. According to an embodiment, the sensor module **176** may include, for example, a gesture sensor, a gyro sensor, an atmospheric pressure sensor, a magnetic sensor, an acceleration sensor, a grip sensor, a proximity sensor, a color sensor, an infrared (IR) sensor, a biometric sensor, a temperature sensor, a humidity sensor, or an illuminance sensor.

**[0069]** The interface **177** may support one or more specified protocols to be used for the electronic device **101** to be coupled with the external electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **102**) directly (e.g., wiredly) or wirelessly. According to an embodiment, the interface **177** may include, for example, a high definition multimedia interface (HDMI), a universal serial bus (USB) interface, a secure digital (SD) card interface, or an audio interface.

**[0070]** A connecting terminal **178** may include a connector via which the electronic device **101** may be physically connected with the external electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **102**). According to an embodiment, the connecting terminal **178** may include, for example, an HDMI connector, a USB connector, an SD card connector, or an audio connector (e.g., a headphone connector).

**[0071]** The haptic module **179** may convert an electrical signal into a mechanical stimulus (e.g., a vibration or a movement) or electrical stimulus which may be recognized by a user via his tactile sensation or kinesthetic sensation. According to an embodiment, the haptic module **179** may include, for example, a motor, a piezoelectric element, or an electric stimulator.

**[0072]** The camera module **180** may capture a still image or moving images. According to an embodiment, the camera module **180** may include one or more lenses, image sensors, image signal processors, or flashes.

**[0073]** The power management module **188** may manage power supplied to the electronic device **101**. According to

one embodiment, the power management module **188** may be implemented as at least part of, for example, a power management integrated circuit (PMIC).

**[0074]** The battery **189** may supply power to at least one component of the electronic device **101**. According to an embodiment, the battery **189** may include, for example, a primary cell which is not rechargeable, a secondary cell which is rechargeable, or a fuel cell.

**[0075]** The communication module **190** may support establishing a direct (e.g., wired) communication channel or a wireless communication channel between the electronic device **101** and the external electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **102**, the electronic device **104**, or the server **108**) and performing communication via the established communication channel. The communication module **190** may include one or more communication processors that are operable independently from the processor **120** (e.g., the AP) and supports a direct (e.g., wired) communication or a wireless communication. According to an embodiment, the communication module **190** may include a wireless communication module **192** (e.g., a cellular communication module, a short-range wireless communication module, or a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) communication module) or a wired communication module **194** (e.g., a local area network (LAN) communication module or a power line communication (PLC) module). A corresponding one of these communication modules may communicate with the external electronic device via the first network **198** (e.g., a short-range communication network, such as Bluetooth™, wireless-fidelity (Wi-Fi) direct, or IR data association (IrDA)) or the second network **199** (e.g., a long-range communication network, such as a legacy cellular network, a 5G network, a next-generation communication network, the Internet, or a computer network (e.g., LAN or wide area network (WAN))). These various types of communication modules may be implemented as a single component (e.g., a single chip), or may be implemented as multi components (e.g., multi chips) separate from each other. The wireless communication module **192** may identify and authenticate the electronic device **101** in a communication network, such as the first network **198** or the second network **199**, using subscriber information (e.g., international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI)) stored in the SIM **196**.

**[0076]** The wireless communication module **192** may support a 5G network, after a 4G network, and next-generation communication technology, e.g., new radio (NR) access technology. The NR access technology may support enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB), massive machine type communications (mMTC), or ultra-reliable and low-latency communications (URLLC). The wireless communication module **192** may support a high-frequency band (e.g., the mm Wave band) to achieve, e.g., a high data transmission rate. The wireless communication module **192** may support various technologies for securing performance on a high-frequency band, such as, e.g., beamforming, massive multiple-input and multiple-output (MIMO), full dimensional MIMO (FD-MIMO), array antenna, analog beam-forming, or large scale antenna. The wireless communication module **192** may support various requirements specified in the electronic device **101**, an external electronic device (e.g., the electronic device **104**), or a network system (e.g., the second network **199**). According to an embodiment, the wireless communication module **192** may support a peak data rate (e.g., 20 Gbps or more) for implementing eMBB, loss

coverage (e.g., 164 dB or less) for implementing mMTC, or U-plane latency (e.g., 0.5 ms or less for each of downlink (DL) and uplink (UL), or a round trip of 1 ms or less) for implementing URLLC.

**[0077]** The antenna module **197** may transmit or receive a signal or power to or from the outside (e.g., the external electronic device) of the electronic device **101**. According to an embodiment, the antenna module **197** may include an antenna including a radiating element composed of a conductive material or a conductive pattern formed in or on a substrate (e.g., a printed circuit board (PCB)). According to an embodiment, the antenna module **197** may include a plurality of antennas (e.g., array antennas). In such a case, at least one antenna appropriate for a communication scheme used in the communication network, such as the first network **198** or the second network **199**, may be selected, for example, by the communication module **190** (e.g., the wireless communication module **192**) from the plurality of antennas. The signal or the power may then be transmitted or received between the communication module **190** and the external electronic device via the selected at least one antenna. According to an embodiment, another component (e.g., a radio frequency integrated circuit (RFIC)) other than the radiating element may be additionally formed as part of the antenna module **197**.

**[0078]** According to various embodiments, the antenna module **197** may form a mm Wave antenna module. According to an embodiment, the mm Wave antenna module may include a printed circuit board, an RFIC disposed on a first surface (e.g., the bottom surface) of the printed circuit board, or adjacent to the first surface and capable of supporting a designated high-frequency band (e.g., the mmWave band), and a plurality of antennas (e.g., array antennas) disposed on a second surface (e.g., the top or a side surface) of the printed circuit board, or adjacent to the second surface and capable of transmitting or receiving signals of the designated high-frequency band.

**[0079]** At least some of the above-described components may be coupled mutually and communicate signals (e.g., commands or data) therebetween via an inter-peripheral communication scheme (e.g., a bus, general purpose input and output (GPIO), serial peripheral interface (SPI), or mobile industry processor interface (MIPI)).

**[0080]** According to an embodiment, commands or data may be transmitted or received between the electronic device **101** and the external electronic device **104** via the server **108** coupled with the second network **199**. Each of the electronic devices **102** or **104** may be a device of a same type as, or a different type, from the electronic device **101**. According to an embodiment, all or some of operations to be executed at the electronic device **101** may be executed at one or more of the external electronic devices **102**, **104**, or **108**. For example, if the electronic device **101** should perform a function or a service automatically, or in response to a request from a user or another device, the electronic device **101**, instead of, or in addition to, executing the function or the service, may request the one or more external electronic devices to perform at least part of the function or the service. The one or more external electronic devices receiving the request may perform the at least part of the function or the service requested, or an additional function or an additional service related to the request, and transfer an outcome of the performing to the electronic device **101**. The electronic device **101** may provide the outcome, with or without further

processing of the outcome, as at least part of a reply to the request. To that end, a cloud computing, distributed computing, mobile edge computing (MEC), or client-server computing technology may be used, for example. The electronic device **101** may provide ultra low-latency services using, e.g., distributed computing or mobile edge computing. In another embodiment, the external electronic device **104** may include an Internet-of-things (IoT) device. The server **108** may be an intelligent server using machine learning and/or a neural network. According to an embodiment, the external electronic device **104** or the server **108** may be included in the second network **199**. The electronic device **101** may be applied to intelligent services (e.g., smart home, smart city, smart car, or healthcare) based on 5G communication technology or IoT-related technology.

**[0081]** The electronic device according to various embodiments may be one of various types of electronic devices. The electronic devices may include, for example, a portable communication device (e.g., a smart phone), a computer device, a portable multimedia device, a portable medical device, a camera, a wearable device, or a home appliance. According to an embodiment of the disclosure, the electronic devices are not limited to those described above.

**[0082]** It should be appreciated that various embodiments of the present disclosure and the terms used therein are not intended to limit the technological features set forth herein to particular embodiments and include various changes, equivalents, or replacements for a corresponding embodiment. With regard to the description of the drawings, similar reference numerals may be used to refer to similar or related elements. It is to be understood that a singular form of a noun corresponding to an item may include one or more of the things, unless the relevant context clearly indicates otherwise. As used herein, each of such phrases as “A or B,” “at least one of A and B,” “at least one of A or B,” “A, B, or C,” “at least one of A, B, and C,” and “at least one of A, B, or C,” may include all possible combinations of the items enumerated together in a corresponding one of the phrases. As used herein, such terms as “1st” and “2nd,” or “first” and “second” may be used to simply distinguish a corresponding component from another, and does not limit the components in other aspect (e.g., importance or order). It is to be understood that if an element (e.g., a first element) is referred to, with or without the term “operatively” or “communicatively,” as “coupled with,” “coupled to,” “connected with,” or “connected to” another element (e.g., a second element), it means that the element may be coupled with the other element directly (e.g., wiredly), wirelessly, or via a third element.

**[0083]** As used in connection with various embodiments of the disclosure, the term “module” may include a unit implemented in hardware, software, or firmware, and may interchangeably be used with other terms, for example, “logic,” “logic block,” “part,” or “circuitry”. A module may be a single integral component, or a minimum unit or part thereof, adapted to perform one or more functions. For example, according to an embodiment, the module may be implemented in a form of an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC).

**[0084]** Various embodiments as set forth herein may be implemented as software (e.g., the program **140**) including one or more instructions that are stored in a storage medium (e.g., internal memory **136** or external memory **138**) that is readable by a machine (e.g., the electronic device **101**). For

example, a processor (e.g., the processor **120**) of the machine (e.g., the electronic device **101**) may invoke at least one of the one or more instructions stored in the storage medium, and execute it, with or without using one or more other components under the control of the processor. This allows the machine to be operated to perform at least one function according to the at least one instruction invoked. The one or more instructions may include a code generated by a compiler or a code executable by an interpreter. The machine-readable storage medium may be provided in the form of a non-transitory storage medium. Wherein, the term “non-transitory” simply means that the storage medium is a tangible device, and does not include a signal (e.g., an electromagnetic wave), but this term does not differentiate between where data is semi-permanently stored in the storage medium and where the data is temporarily stored in the storage medium.

**[0085]** According to an embodiment, a method according to various embodiments of the disclosure may be included and provided in a computer program product. The computer program product may be traded as a product between a seller and a buyer. The computer program product may be distributed in the form of a machine-readable storage medium (e.g., compact disc read only memory (CD-ROM)), or be distributed (e.g., downloaded or uploaded) online via an application store (e.g., Play Store™), or between two user devices (e.g., smart phones) directly. If distributed online, at least part of the computer program product may be temporarily generated or at least temporarily stored in the machine-readable storage medium, such as memory of the manufacturer's server, a server of the application store, or a relay server.

**[0086]** According to various embodiments, each component (e.g., a module or a program) of the above-described components may include a single entity or multiple entities, and some of the multiple entities may be separately disposed in different components. According to various embodiments, one or more of the above-described components may be omitted, or one or more other components may be added. Alternatively or additionally, a plurality of components (e.g., modules or programs) may be integrated into a single component. In such a case, according to various embodiments, the integrated component may still perform one or more functions of each of the plurality of components in the same or similar manner as they are performed by a corresponding one of the plurality of components before the integration. According to various embodiments, operations performed by the module, the program, or another component may be carried out sequentially, in parallel, repeatedly, or heuristically, or one or more of the operations may be executed in a different order or omitted, or one or more other operations may be added.

**[0087]** FIGS. 2A to 2C illustrate a foldable electronic device in a folded state according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. 2A illustrates a perspective view, FIG. 2B illustrates a front view, and FIG. 2C illustrates a rear view.

**[0088]** FIGS. 3A to 3C illustrate a foldable electronic device in a 180-degree unfolded state according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. 3A illustrates a perspective view, FIG. 3B illustrates a front view, and FIG. 3C illustrates a rear view.

**[0089]** Referring to FIGS. 2A to 3C, an electronic device **101** includes a foldable housing **210** (or a “housing”) including a first housing **211** and a second housing **212**, a

flexible display 220, a hinge assembly 300, and a cover 230 (or a “rear cover”). The cover 230 includes a first cover 2301 included in the first housing 211 and a second cover 2302 included in the second housing 212.

[0090] The first housing 211 and the second housing 212 may construct a space in which electronic components (e.g., a PCB, a battery, a processor, etc.) of the electronic device 101 can be disposed, and may construct a side face of the electronic device 101. Various types of components for performing various functions of the electronic device 101 may be disposed inside the first housing 211 and the second housing 212. For example, a front camera, a receiver, a sensor (e.g., a proximity sensor), etc., may be disposed inside the first housing 211 and the second housing 212. Electronic components may also be exposed to a front face of the electronic device 101 through at least one opening 220d or recess prepared on the flexible display 220.

[0091] The first housing 211 and the second housing 212 may be disposed in parallel to each other when the electronic device 101 is in an unfolded state. When the electronic device 101 is in the folded state, the first housing 211 may rotate (or turn) with respect to the second housing 212, so that one face of the first housing 211 faces one face of the second housing 212.

[0092] The first housing 211 and the second housing 212 may construct a recess for accommodating the flexible display 220, and the flexible display 220 may be supported by the first housing 211 and the second housing 212 by being mounted to the recess. Alternatively, the flexible display 220 may be supported by a first support plate and/or second support plate located between the flexible display 220 and first and second housings 211 and 212, as will be described below with reference to FIG. 4A. The first housing 211 and the second housing 212 may be constructed of a metal material and/or non-metal material having a specified rigidity to support the flexible display 220.

[0093] The flexible display 220 may be disposed on the first housing 211 and the second housing 212 to construct a front face of the electronic device 101 when the electronic device 101 is in the unfolded state. That is, the flexible display 220 may be disposed by extending up to at least one region of the second housing 212 across the hinge assembly 300 from one region of the first housing 211. The flexible display 220 may be disposed on the first housing 211 and the second housing 212 by being mounted to the recess constructed by the first housing 211 and the second housing 212.

[0094] The flexible display 220 includes a first region 220a corresponding to at least one region of the first housing 211, a second region 220b corresponding to at least one region of the second housing 212, and a folding region 220c located between the first region 220a and the second region 220b and having a flexible characteristic. However, the disclosure is not limited to the aforementioned embodiment, and the first region 220a, second region 220b, and folding region 220c of the flexible display 220 may be constructed to have the flexible characteristic. The first region 220a, the folding region 220c, and the second region 220b may be disposed in parallel to face the same direction, when the electronic device 101 is in the unfolded state. When the electronic device 101 is in the folded state, the folding region 220c may be bent such that the first region 220a and the second region 220b are disposed to face each other.

[0095] At least one region (e.g., the first region 220a, the second region 220b) of the flexible display 220 may be

attached to one face of the first housing 211 and one face of the second housing 212. Alternatively, the flexible display 220 may be attached to one face of the first housing 211 and one face of the second housing 212 through the support plates 221 and 222 located between the flexible display 220 and the first and second housings 211 and 212.

[0096] The support plates 221 and 222 may include the first support plate 221 attached to at least one region of the first housing 211 to support the first region 220a of the flexible display 220 and the second support plate 222 attached to at least one region of the second housing 212 to support the second region 220b of the flexible display 220. The first support plate 221 may be attached to at least one portion of the first region 220a of the flexible display 220 to support the flexible display 220. Similarly, the second support plate 222 may be attached to at least one portion of the second region 220b of the flexible display 220 to support the flexible display 220. The first support plate 221 and the second support plate 222 may be constructed of a material having a rigidity to support the flexible display 220.

[0097] The hinge assembly 300 couples the first housing 211 and the second housing 212, and may rotate the second housing 212 about the first housing 211 within a specified rotation range, or on the contrary, may rotate the first housing 211 about the second housing 212 within a specified rotation range.

[0098] A recess 211c may be constructed in a region where the first housing 211 and the second housing 212 are coupled, so that the hinge assembly 300 is disposed between the first housing 211 and the second housing 212. The aforementioned recess 211c may be constructed in a shape of a groove having a specific coerture, but is not limited thereto.

[0099] A hinge housing 300c may be disposed between the first and second housings 211 and 212, and the hinge assembly 300 may be assembled to the hinge housing 300c. The hinge housing 300c may be visible to the outside of the electronic device 101 according to a state of the electronic device 101, or may be hidden by the foldable housing 210. For example, referring to FIG. 3C, when the electronic device 101 is in the unfolded state, the hinge housing 300c is hidden by the folding housing 210, and thus may be invisible to the outside of the electronic device 101. As another example, e.g., as illustrated in FIGS. 2A to 2C, when the electronic device 101 is in the folded state, the hinge housing 300c may be visible to the outside of the electronic device 101 due to a rotation of the first housing 211 and second housing 212.

[0100] The cover 230 may be located at a lower end of the first housing 211 and second housing 212 to construct a rear face of the electronic device 101. The cover 230 may include the first cover 2301 coupled to the first housing 211 and the second cover 2302 coupled to the second housing 212. The first cover and the first housing 211 may be constructed integrally, and the second cover and the second housing 212 may also be constructed integrally.

[0101] FIG. 4A illustrates an exploded view of an electronic device in an unfolded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 4B illustrates an exploded perspective view illustrating an inner structure of an electronic device according to an embodiment.

[0102] Referring to FIGS. 4A and 4B, a foldable electronic device includes a flexible display 220, first and second

housings **211** and **212**, a hinge assembly **300**, batteries **B1** and **B2**, and at least one PCB **224**.

[0103] A foldable housing **210** may include a first housing **211** and a second housing **212**. The first and second housings **211** and **212** may be physically coupled by the hinge assembly **300** in a rotatable manner. The first housing **211** may include a first lateral member **211a** and a first cover **2301** coupled to the first lateral member **211a**, and the second housing **212** may include a second lateral member **212a** and a second cover **2302** coupled to the second lateral member **212a**.

[0104] The first battery **B1** is disposed to the first housing **211** and the second battery **B2** is disposed to the second housing **212**. The second battery **B2** may have a greater capacity than the first battery **B1**, and may be heavier than the first battery **B1**.

[0105] The PCB may include a main PCB and a sub PCB for electrically coupling at least one first electronic component disposed to the first housing **211** and at least one second electronic component disposed to the second housing **212**. For example, the sub PCB may be an FPCB disposed via the hinge housing **300c**.

[0106] The hinge assembly **300** includes hinge structures **300a** and **300b**. The hinge structures **300a** and **300b** may be disposed to a hinge housing **300c**. First and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be disposed respectively to the first and second housings **211** and **212**. A cap 'c' may be coupled to a support portion of the hinge structure. The hinge structures **300a** and **300b** may provide a rotation axis of the first and second housings **211** and **212**, and may provide force for maintaining a state of the electronic device at a specific angle, e.g., 0, 45, 90, or 180 degrees.

[0107] FIGS. **5A** to **5C** illustrate a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. **5A** illustrates a perspective view of a folded state, FIG. **5B** illustrates a perspective view of an open state of approximately 90 degrees, and FIG. **5C** illustrates a perspective view of an open state of approximately 180 degrees.

[0108] Referring to FIGS. **5A** to **5C**, a hinge assembly **300** included in an electronic device **101** is in a folded (closed) state in FIG. **5A**, a 180-degree unfolded (open) state in FIG. **5C**, and an approximately 90-degree unfolded (open) state in FIG. **5B**.

[0109] The hinge assembly **300** may provide force capable of maintaining a closed state, a 180-degree open state, or an approximately 90-degree open state by a cam operation in an opening/closing operation. For example, the operation of the hinge assembly **300** may be provided by a mutual cam operation between hinge cams included in a hinge structure. Maintaining force may be provided at various opening/closing degrees of the electronic device **101** by changing a cam shape of the hinge cam.

[0110] FIG. **6** illustrates an exploded perspective view of a hinge structure according to an embodiment.

[0111] Referring to FIG. **6**, a hinge structure **300a** or **300b** includes a bracket structure **310**, an arm structure **320**, a rotation structure **330**, a detent structure **340**, a support portion **350**, a stopper **360**, an elastic member **361**, and a screw **362**. At least one of components of the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. **6** may be identical or similar to at least one of components of the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. **4**, and redundant descriptions will be omitted hereinafter.

[0112] The bracket structure **310** includes a first bracket **311**, a second bracket **312**, and a fixing bracket **313**.

[0113] The fixing bracket **313** may be disposed to a hinge housing to support the first bracket **311** and the second bracket **312**. A first groove **313a** and a second groove **313b** may be constructed in an upper face of the fixing bracket **313** (e.g., a face of the +y direction), and the first bracket **311** and the second bracket **312** may be coupled to the fixing bracket **313** through the first groove **313a** and the second groove **313b**. The first groove **313a** and the second groove **313b** may be constructed in an arc shape having a specific curvature, the first bracket **311** may be coupled to the first groove **313a**, and the second bracket **312** may be coupled to the second groove **313b**. Although the first groove **313a** and the second groove **313b** are constructed in an arc shape having the same curvature, in FIG. **6**, the first groove **313a** and the second groove **313b** may be constructed in arc shapes having different curvatures. The first groove **313a** may be constructed in one region (e.g., a region of the +x direction) of the fixing bracket **313** adjacent to the first bracket **311**, and the second groove **313b** may be constructed in another region of the fixing bracket **313** adjacent to the second bracket **312**.

[0114] A plurality of gear holes **313d** and a plurality of shaft holes **313e** may be constructed in one side face (e.g., a face of the +z direction) of the fixing bracket **313**. First and second idle gears **333** and **334** may be fastened to first and second shafts **331** and **332** on one side face of the fixing bracket **313** through the aforementioned gear hole **313d** and shaft hole **313e**.

[0115] The first bracket **311** includes a first rail portion **311a**, a first slide hole **311b**, and a plurality of coupling holes **311c**. The first rail portion **311a** may be constructed to protrude in one region of the first bracket **311**. The first rail portion **311a** may be constructed in a shape corresponding to the first groove **313a** of the fixing bracket **313**, and the first bracket **311** may be coupled to the first groove **313a** of the fixing bracket **313** through the first rail portion **311a**. The first slide hole **311b** may be constructed in one region of the first bracket **311** adjacent to a first arm **321**, and the first bracket **311** and the first arm **321** may be coupled through a first fixing portion **323** which passes through the first slide hole **311b** and the first arm **321**. The first fixing portion **323** may be slid inside the first slide hole **311b** as the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0116] The plurality of coupling holes **311c** may be constructed in one face (e.g., a face of the +y direction) facing a first housing of the first bracket **311**, and the first bracket **311** may be coupled to one region of the first housing through the plurality of coupling holes **311c**. The first bracket **311** coupled to the first housing may be slid along the first groove **313a** of the fixing bracket **313** with the rotation of the first housing, and may rotate about a virtual first rotation axis **L1**.

[0117] The second bracket **312** includes a second rail portion **312a**, a second slide hole **312b**, and a plurality of coupling holes **312c**. The second rail portion **312a** may be constructed to protrude in one region of the second bracket **312**. The second rail portion **312a** may be constructed in a shape corresponding to the second groove **313b** of the fixing bracket **313**, and the second bracket **312** may be coupled to the second groove **313b** of the fixing bracket **313** through the second rail portion **312a**. The second slide hole **312b** may be

constructed in one region of the second bracket **312** adjacent to a second arm **322**, and the second bracket **312** and the second arm **322** may be coupled through a second fixing portion **324** which passes through the second slide hole **312b** and the second arm **322**. The second fixing portion **324** may be slid inside the second slide hole **312b** as the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0118] The plurality of coupling holes **312c** may be constructed in one face (e.g., a face of the +y direction) facing a second housing of the second bracket **312**, and the second bracket **312** may be coupled to one region of the second housing through the plurality of coupling holes **312c**. The second bracket **312** coupled to the second housing may be slid along the second groove **313b** of the fixing bracket **313** with the rotation of the second housing, and may rotate about a virtual second rotation axis **L2**. In this case, the virtual first rotation axis **L1** and the virtual second rotation axis **L2** are parallel, and may be constructed in a flat face parallel to the flexible display when the electronic device is in the folded state.

[0119] The arm structure **320** includes the first arm **321** and the second arm **322**.

[0120] The first arm **321** includes a first cam portion **321a**, a first support rib **321b**, a first insertion hole **321c**, and a first through-hole **321d**. The first insertion hole **321c** may be constructed in one region of a lower end (e.g., the -y direction) of the first arm **321**, and the first shaft **331** to be described below may be inserted to the first insertion hole **321c** to couple the first arm **321** and the first shaft **331**. As the first arm **321** and the first shaft **331** are coupled, the first arm **321** may rotate about a rotation axis of the first shaft **331**.

[0121] The first cam portion **321a** may be constructed in a region adjacent to the first insertion hole **321c**, and may be constructed to protrude in a direction of a detent plate **341** (e.g., the +z direction). The first cam portion **321a** may be constructed in a concavo-convex shape in which a plurality of peaks and valleys are repeated, and the first cam portion **321a** may be disposed to be engaged with a detent portion **341a** constructed in the detent plate **341** to provide a cam operation to the first arm **321**. In addition, since the first cam portion **321a** may be disposed to be engaged with the detent portion **341a** constructed in the detent plate **341**, the first arm **321** may be fixed at a specified rotation angle and/or in a specified rotation angle range. As a result, a movement of the electronic device may be fixed at the specified rotation angle and/or in the specified rotation angle range (e.g., the range from 30° to 150°).

[0122] The first support rib **321b** may be constructed to protrude from one region of the first arm **321**, and may move the support portion **350** in an upper direction (e.g., the +y direction) when the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. The first through-hole **321d** may be constructed in one region (e.g., a region of the +x direction) in the opposite side of a region in which the first insertion hole **321c** of the first arm **321** is constructed. The first fixing portion **323** passing through the first slide hole **311b** may pass through the first through-hole **321d** to couple the first bracket **311** and the first arm **321**. A first washer ring **325** may be fastened to one end of the first fixing portion passing through the first through-hole **321d**, so that the first fixing portion **323** is fixed to the first arm **321**.

[0123] Alternatively, the first washer ring **325** may be fastened to the other end of the first fixing portion **323**, so that the first fixing portion **323** is fixed to the first bracket **311**. In addition, a protrusion may be constructed in one region of the first bracket **311** (or the first arm **321**), and a coupling groove corresponding to the protrusion may be constructed in one region of the first arm **321** (or the first bracket **311**), so that the first bracket **311** and the first arm **321** are coupled with the protrusion through the coupling groove. The first arm **321** coupled with the first bracket **311** may rotate about a rotation axis different from that of the first bracket **311** while sliding with respect to the first bracket **311**, while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0124] The second arm **322** includes a second cam portion **322a**, a second support rib **322b**, a second insertion hole **322c**, and a second through-hole **322d**. The second insertion hole **322c** may be constructed in one region of a lower end (e.g., the -y direction) of the second arm **322**, and the second shaft **332** to be described below may be inserted to the second insertion hole **322c** to couple the second arm **322** and the second shaft **332**. As the second arm **322** and the second shaft **332** are coupled, the second arm **322** may rotate about a rotation axis of the second shaft **332**. The second cam portion **322a** may be constructed in a region adjacent to the second insertion hole **322c**, and may be constructed to protrude in a direction of the detent plate **341** (e.g., the +z direction). Similarly to the first cam portion **321a**, the second cam portion **322a** may be constructed in a concavo-convex shape in which a plurality of peaks and valleys are repeated, and the second cam portion **322a** may be disposed to be engaged with a detent portion **341b** constructed in the detent plate **341** to provide a cam operation to the second arm **322**. In addition, since the second cam portion **322a** may be disposed to be engaged with the detent portion **341b** constructed in the detent plate **341**, the second arm **322** may be fixed at a specified rotation angle and/or in a specified rotation angle range. As a result, a movement of the electronic device may be fixed at the specified rotation angle and/or in the specified rotation angle range (e.g., the range from 30° to 150°).

[0125] The second support rib **322b** may be constructed to protrude from one region of the second arm **322**, and may move the support portion **350** in an upper direction (e.g., the +y direction) when the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. The second through-hole **322d** may be constructed in a region in the opposite side of the second insertion hole **322c**. The second fixing portion **324** passing through the second slide hole **312b** may pass through the second through-hole **322d** to couple the second bracket **312** and the second arm **322**. A second washer ring **326** may be fastened to one end of the second fixing portion passing through the second through-hole **322d**, so that the second fixing portion **324** is fixed to the second arm **322**. Alternatively, the second washer ring **326** may be fastened to the other end of the second fixing portion **324**, so that the second fixing portion **324** is fixed to the second bracket **312**. In addition, a protrusion may be constructed in one region of the second bracket **312** (or the second arm **322**), and a coupling groove corresponding to the protrusion may be constructed in one region of the second arm **322** (or the second bracket **312**), so that the second bracket **312** and the second arm **322** are coupled with the protrusion through the



coupling groove. The second arm 322 coupled with the second bracket 312 may rotate about a rotation axis different from that of the first bracket 312 while sliding with respect to the second bracket 312, while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0126] The rotation structure 330 includes the first shaft 331 coupled with a first gear 331a, the second shaft 332 coupled with a second gear 332a, the first idle gear 333, the second idle gear 334, a shaft bracket 335, and a gear cover 336.

[0127] One end of the first shaft 331 may be fastened to the shaft hole 313e of the fixing bracket 313, and the other end of the first shaft 331 may pass through a first shaft insertion hole 335a of the shaft bracket 335. The first arm 321 may be coupled to one region of the first shaft 331, and the first arm 321 may rotate about the first shaft 331 as the rotation axis.

[0128] The second shaft 332 may be disposed to a position adjacent to the first shaft 331. One end of the second shaft 332 may be fastened to the shaft hole 313e of the fixing bracket 313, and the other end of the second shaft 332 may pass through a second shaft insertion hole 335b of the shaft bracket 335. The second arm 322 may be coupled to one region of the second shaft 332, and the second arm 322 may rotate about the second shaft 332 as the rotation axis.

[0129] The first idle gear 333 and the second idle gear 334 may be disposed between the first gear 331a coupled to the first shaft 331 and the second gear 332a coupled to the second shaft 332. The first idle gear 333 and the second idle gear 334 may be fastened to the plurality of gear holes 313d of the fixing bracket 313, and the first idle gear 333 and the second idle gear 334 may rotate by being engaged with each other so that the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 rotate by the same rotation angle. The first idle gear 333 may rotate by being engaged with the first gear 331a and the second idle gear 334, and the second idle gear 334 may rotate by being engaged with the first idle gear 333 and the second gear 332a.

[0130] As the first gear 331, second gear 332a, first idle gear 333, and second idle gear 334 rotate by the same rotation angle by being engaged with one another, the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 may rotate by the same rotation angle in opposite directions. When the first shaft 331 rotates by 30° counterclockwise (e.g., a direction from the +x axis to the +y axis), the second shaft 332 may rotate by 30° clockwise. As the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 rotate by the same rotation angle, the first arm 321 and second arm 322 coupled to the first shaft 331 and second shaft 332 may rotate by the same rotation angle.

[0131] The shaft bracket 335 may include the first shaft insertion hole 335a to which the first shaft 331 is inserted and the second shaft hole 335b to which the second shaft 332 is inserted. The shaft bracket 335 may be disposed inside a hinge housing to support the first shaft 331 and second shaft 332 inserted to the shaft bracket 335 through the first shaft hole 335a and the second shaft hole 335b.

[0132] The gear cover 336 may be inserted to the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 to protect the first gear 331a, the second gear 332a, the first idle gear 333, and the second idle gear 334. The gear cover 336 may prevent the first gear 331a, the second gear 332a, the first idle gear 333, and the second idle gear 334 from being damaged by external force,

and may prevent foreign material from entering the first gear 331a, the second gear 332a, the first idle gear 333, and the second idle gear 334.

[0133] The detent structure 340 includes the detent plate 341, a first spring 342, and a second spring 343.

[0134] A third shaft insertion hole 341c to which the first shaft 331 is inserted may be constructed in one region of the detent plate 341, and a fourth shaft insertion hole 341d to which the second shaft 332 is inserted may be constructed in another region of the detent plate 341. The detent plate 341 may be coupled to the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 through the third shaft insertion hole 341c and the fourth shaft insertion hole 341d. The detent plate 341 includes the first detent portion 341a constructed to protrude in a direction of the first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321 and the second detent portion 341b constructed to protrude in a direction of the second cam portion 322a of the second arm 322. The first detent portion 341a and the second detent portion 341b may be constructed in a concavo-convex structure in which at least one peak and valley appear repeatedly. The first detent portion 341a may be disposed to be engaged with the first cam portion 321a, and thus, when the electronic device is in the folded state or the unfolded state, may provide a cam operation to the first arm 321 and fix a movement of the first arm 321 at a specified rotation angle. Similarly, the second detent portion 341b may be disposed to be engaged with the second cam portion 322a and thus, when the electronic device is in the folded state or the unfolded state, may provide a cam operation to the second arm 322 and fix a movement of the second arm at a specified rotation angle.

[0135] A pitch between a peak and another peak or between a valley and another valley of the first detent portion 341a may be greater than a pitch between a peak and another peak or between a valley and another valley of the first cam portion 321a, so that the first arm 321 is rotatable within a specified rotation range even in a state in which the first detent portion 341a and the first cam portion 321a are engaged. However, a shape of the first detent portion 341a is not limited to the aforementioned example. The pitch between the peaks or valleys of the first detent portion 341a may be constructed to be identical to the pitch between the peaks or valleys of the first cam portion 321a or the pitch between the peaks or valleys of the first cam portion 321a may be constructed to be greater than the pitch between the peaks or valleys of the first detent portion 341a.

[0136] Similarly, a pitch between a peak and another peak or between a valley and another valley of the second detent portion 341b may be greater than a pitch between a peak and another peak or between a valley and another valley of the second cam portion 322a, so that the second arm 322 is rotatable within a specified rotation range even in a state in which the second detent portion 341b and the second cam portion 322a are engaged. However, a shape of the second detent portion 341b is not limited to the aforementioned example. The pitch between the peaks or valleys of the second detent portion 341b may be constructed to be identical to the pitch between the peaks or valleys of the second cam portion 322a or the pitch between the peaks or valleys of the second cam portion 322a may be constructed to be greater than the pitch between the peaks or between the valleys of the second detent portion 341b.

[0137] The first spring 342 may be disposed to surround one region of the first shaft 331, and the second spring 343

may be disposed to surround one region of the second shaft 332. The first spring 342 and the second spring 343 may be disposed in a state of being compressed between the detent plate 341 and the shaft bracket 335, so that the detent plate 341 is closely in contact in a direction of the first arm 321 and the second arm 322. As the detent plate 341 is closely in contact in a direction of the first arm 321 and the second arm 322, it is possible to maintain a state in which the first detent portion 341a and the first cam portion 321a are engaged and a state in which the second detent portion 341b and the second cam portion 322a are engaged.

[0138] When the peak of the first detent portion 341a and the peak of the first cam portion 321a or the peak of the second detent portion 341b and the peak of the second cam portion 322a are in contact due to a rotation of the first arm 321 and the second arm 322, the detent plate 341 may move in one direction of the first shaft 331 and second shaft 332 (e.g., the +z direction), so that the first cam portion 321a and the first detent portion 341a and/or the second cam portion 322a and the second detent portion 341b are temporarily spaced apart. As the detent plate 341 moves in one direction, the first spring 342 and the second spring 343 may be compressed. When the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 further rotate by a specific angle, the detent plate 341 may move again in a direction of the first cam portion 321a and/or the second cam portion 322a due to elastic restoration force of the first spring 342 and second spring 343. As a result, the first cam portion 321a and the first detent portion 341a may be disposed in a state of being engaged again with the second cam portion 322a and the second detent portion 341b, thereby maintaining a state in which the first cam portion 321a and the first detent portion 341a are engaged and the second cam portion 322a and the second detent portion 341b are engaged.

[0139] A flat linear region may be constructed in at least one region (e.g., a summit region) of the peak of the first cam portion 321a, the peak of the second cam portion 322a, the peak of the first detent portion 341a, and/or the peak of the second detent portion 341b. Similarly, a flat linear region may also be constructed in at least one region of the valley of the first cam portion 321a, the valley of the second cam portion 322a, the valley of the first detent portion 341a, and/or the valley of the second detent portion 341b. The linear region constructed in one region of the peak and the linear region constructed in one region of the valley may be constructed to be substantially identical or similar. As the linear region is constructed in the peaks and valleys of the first cam portion 321, second cam portion 322a, first detent portion 341a, and second detent portion 341b, a movement of the first arm 321 and/or second arm 322 may be fixed at a specified rotation angle (e.g., 30° or 60°) and/or in a specified rotation angle range (e.g., a rotation angle range of 30° to 150°). As the movement of the first arm 321 and/or second arm 322 is fixed at the specified rotation angle, a movement of a first housing and second housing of the electronic device may be fixed at the specified rotation angle.

[0140] The support portion 350 may be disposed to an empty space between the first and second arms 321 and 322 and the first and second shafts 331 and 332. When the electronic device is in an unfolded state, the support portion 350 may support one region of a flexible display not supported by the first arm 321 and/or the second arm 322. The support portion 350 may move in an upper direction

(e.g., the +y direction) by using the first arm rib 321b constructed in one region of the first arm 321 and the second support rib 322b constructed in one region of the second arm 322. While the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state, the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b may be in contact with one region of the support portion 350, and the support portion 350 may move in an upper direction (e.g., in a direction from the -y axis to the +y axis) by the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b with the rotation of the first arm 321 and the second arm 322.

[0141] The stopper 360 may be located at a lower end of the support portion 350 (e.g., the -y direction). A fifth shaft insertion hole 360a may be constructed in one region of the stopper 360, and a sixth shaft insertion hole 360b may be constructed in one region in the opposite side of the fifth shaft insertion hole 360a. The first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 may be inserted through the fifth shaft insertion hole 360a and the sixth shaft insertion hole 360b, and the first shaft 331, the second shaft 332, and the stopper 360 may be coupled through the aforementioned structure. A through-hole 360c may be constructed in one region of an upper end of the stopper 360 (e.g., the +y direction), and an elastic support portion 3505 of the support portion 350 may be inserted in a lower direction of the stopper 360 by passing through the through-hole 360c.

[0142] The screw 362 may be coupled with the elastic support portion 3505 inserted to the lower end of the stopper 360, and the elastic member 361 may be disposed between the screw 362 and the stopper 360. The elastic member 361 may be a spring, but is not limited thereto. The elastic member 361 may be in contact with one region of the stopper 360, and the elastic member 361 may be compressed while the support portion 350 moves in an upper direction while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. While the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the support portion 350 may move in a lower direction (e.g., the -y direction) due to elastic restoration force of the elastic member 361.

[0143] The hinge structure 300a or 300b further includes a first auxiliary member 363 and a second auxiliary member 364. The first auxiliary member 363 may be fastened to one end of the first shaft 331 adjacent to the shaft bracket 335, and the second auxiliary member 364 may be fastened to one end of the second shaft 332 adjacent to the shaft bracket 335. A third washer ring 331b may be fastened to one end of the first shaft 331, and thus the first shaft 331 may be fixed to the first auxiliary member 363. Similarly, a fourth washer ring 332b may be fastened to one end of the second shaft 332, and thus the second shaft 332 may be fixed to the second auxiliary member 364. A screw nut may be fastened to one end of the first shaft 331 so that the first shaft 331 is fixed to the first auxiliary member 363, or a screw nut may also be fastened to one end of the second shaft 332 so that the second shaft 332 is fixed to the second auxiliary member 364.

[0144] The first auxiliary member 363 includes a third support rib 363a, and the third support rib 363a may be constructed to protrude from one region of the first auxiliary member 363. The second auxiliary member 364 includes a fourth support rib 364a, and the fourth support rib 364a may be constructed to protrude from one region of the second auxiliary member 364. The first auxiliary member 363 may rotate by the same rotation angle as the first arm 321 through

the first shaft 331, and the second auxiliary member 364 may rotate by the same rotation angle as the second arm 322 through the second shaft 332. When the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state, the third support rib 363a and the fourth support rib 364a may allow the support portion 350 to move in an upper direction together with the first support rib 321b of the first arm 321 and the second support rib 322b of the second arm 322.

[0145] FIG. 7A is a perspective view illustrating a support portion according to an embodiment, FIG. 7B is a plan view illustrating a support portion according to an embodiment, and FIG. 7C is a lateral view illustrating a support portion according to an embodiment.

[0146] Referring to FIGS. 7A to 7C, a support portion 350 supports a flexible display when the flexible display is unfolded, and may have an approximately bar shape.

[0147] The support portion 350 supports a folding of the flexible display, and may be disposed to face the folding region. The support portion 350 may support the folding region to be flat in a 180-degree unfolded (open) state, and may move in a direction away from the folding region in a folding operation (a closing operation).

[0148] The support portion 350 may be a bar type having a length and may be disposed between both hinge structures 300a and 300b. The support portion 350 includes a first face 350a and a second face 350b facing away from the first face 350a. The first face 350a may be a face facing the flexible display, and the second face 350b may be a face facing the hinge housing.

[0149] The support portion 350 is a connector which connects first and second hinge structures, and both ends of the support portion 350 may be respectively coupled to the first and second structures.

[0150] The support portion 350 includes a center portion 3501, a fastening portion 3502, a hook portion 3504, an elastic support portion 3505, and ends 3506. In the support portion 350, the fastening portions 3502 may be located respectively at both sides with respect to the center portion 3501, the hook portions 3504 may be located respectively at both sides of the fastening portion, the elastic support portions 3505 may be located respectively at both sides of the hook portion 3504, and the ends 3506 may be located respectively at opposite sides of the elastic support portion 3505.

[0151] The center portion 3501 may be located between first and second hinge structures, may be located between first and second hinge, or may be located between an FPCB and a folding region of the flexible display.

[0152] In the center portion 3501, the first face 3501a may face the folding region of the flexible display, and the second face 3501b may face the hinge housing. The center portion 3501 may be disposed to a space between the first and second hinge plates to support the flexible display to be flat in a state in which the electronic device is in a 180-degree unfolded state, as a support member that supports the flexible display.

[0153] The fastening portion 3502 may be a fastening hole to which a fastener is inserted. The hook portion 3504 may have a hook shape protruding from the second face 350b. The hook portion 3504 may be caught by some support structures of the hinge housing, so that the support portion 350 is constrained not to be separated from the hinge housing. The elastic support portion 3505 may have a cylindrical shape as a portion in which an elastic body is

accommodated. The ends 3506 may have the narrowest widths in the support portion 350. The center portion 3501 of the support portion 350 may be constructed to have a smaller width than the fastening portion 3502, the hook portion 3504, or the elastic support portion 3505, and may be constructed to have a greater thickness.

[0154] The support portion 350 include a plurality of first support grooves 3503 on the first face 350a. The plurality of support groove 3503 may be grooves for mounting first and second protrusion portions of first and second hinge plates. The plurality of support grooves 3503 may be constructed bilaterally symmetrically at both sides with respect to the center portion 3501, and may be constructed symmetrically at upper and lower sides. The support portion 350 may be constructed of a metal material, e.g., a Stainless Use Steel (SUS) material or a metal powder material.

[0155] FIG. 8A illustrates a hinge assembly fastened to an unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment. FIG. 8B is a plan view illustrating a hinge structure according to an embodiment.

[0156] Referring to FIGS. 8A and 8B, a hinge structure 300a or 300b includes a bracket structure 310, an arm structure 320, a rotation structure 330, a detent structure 340, and a support portion 350.

[0157] The bracket structure 310 includes a plurality of brackets 311 and 312 coupled with a first housing and a second housing, and a fixing bracket 313 that supports the plurality of brackets 311 and 312. The plurality of brackets 311 and 312 coupled with the first housing and the second housing may rotate together with the first housing and the second housing while the electronic device rotates from a folded state to an unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0158] The arm structure 320 may include an arm coupled to some constitutions (e.g., a shaft) of the rotation structure 330 and rotatable within a specified range (e.g., 0° to 90° or 10° to 80°). The arm may be coupled with one region of a bracket of the bracket structure 310 and thus may be slid with respect to the bracket in a rotation process of the electronic device.

[0159] The rotation structure 330 includes a plurality of shafts 331 and 332, a plurality of gears 331a and 332a coupled with the plurality of shafts 331 and 332, a plurality of idle gears 333 and 334 gear-coupled with the plurality of gears 331a and 332a, and a shaft bracket supporting the plurality of shafts. As the plurality of shafts 331 and 332, the plurality of gears 331a and 332a, and the plurality of idle gears 333 and 334 rotate in an engaged manner, the rotation structure 330 may allow the first housing and the second housing to rotate by the same rotation angle. Arms 321 and 322 of the arm structure 320 may be coupled to the shafts 331 and 332 of the rotation structure 330. Accordingly, the arm may rotate about a rotation axis (or a turning axis) different from the brackets 311 and 312 of the bracket structure 310 while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state.

[0160] The detent structure 340 includes a detent plate 341 having a detent portion constructed thereon, and a plurality of springs 342 and 343. The detent portion may be constructed to protrude from one region of the detent plate 341 facing the aforementioned arm. The detent portion may be constructed in a concavo-convex shape corresponding to a cam portion constructed in one region of the arms 321 and

**322.** The detent portion may be engaged with the cam portion of the arms **321** and **322** to fix a movement of the arm when the electronic device is in the folded state. The plurality of springs **342** and **343** may be disposed between the detent plate **341** and the shaft bracket of the rotation structure **330**. The plurality of springs **342** and **343** may be disposed between the detent plate **341** and the shaft bracket in a compressed state, so that the detent plate **341** is in contact with one region of the arms **321** and **322**.

**[0161]** The support portion **350** may be disposed to an empty space between the plurality of arms **321** and **322** and the plurality of shafts **331** and **332**. The support portion **350** may move up and down between the flexible display and the hinge housing due to a rotation of the plurality of arms **321** and **322**.

**[0162]** The support portion **350** may move in a direction of the flexible display due to the rotation of the plurality of arms while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. As a result, the support portion **350** may be located to a rear face of the flexible display to support one region of the flexible display. The support portion **350** may be in contact with at least one region of the rear face of the flexible display to support the flexible display.

**[0163]** The support portion **350** may be spaced apart by a minute distance from the flexible display to support one region of the flexible display.

**[0164]** A support plate may be attached to at least one region of the flexible display by means of an adhesive member (e.g., an adhesive). The support portion **350** may support at least one region of the rear face of the support plate.

**[0165]** While the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the support portion **350** may be spaced apart from the flexible display, and thus may not affect a driving trajectory of the flexible display.

**[0166]** The support portion **350** may be disposed between the first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b**, and may provide a connection between the first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b**. One end of the support portion **350** may be disposed to the first hinge structure **300a**, the other end of the support portion **350** may be disposed to the second hinge structure **300b**, and the center portion of the support portion **350** may be located between the first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b**.

**[0167]** The support portion **350** may be disposed between the flexible display and at least one or more FPCBs **226** and **227**. The ends of the support portion **350** may be disposed between the flexible display and each of the first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b**, and the center portion may be disposed between the flexible display and at least one or more FPCBs **226** and **227**. For example, the flexible display and the FPCB may be spatially separated from each other due to the center portion of the support portion **350**.

**[0168]** The FPCBs **226** and **227** may include the main FPCB **226** and the sub FPCB **227**. The main FPCB **226** and the sub FPCB **227** may be disposed between the center portion **3501** of the support portion and the hinge housing. The folding region of the flexible display, the center portion of the support portion, and the FPCBs **226** and **227** may be disposed in a mutually stacked structure. The FPCBs **226** and **227** may electrically couple at least one electronic component disposed to the first housing and at least one second electronic component disposed to the second hous-

ing. The first electronic component may be a main PCB, and the second electronic component may be a first battery.

**[0169]** In the opening/closing operation of the electronic device, the support portion **350** may move downwardly toward the FPCBs **226** and **227**, and the downward movement of the support portion **350** may constrain the movement of the FPCBs **226** and **227**. The support portion **250** may prevent the FPCBs **226** and **227** from being detached by being unevenly wrinkled.

**[0170]** In the opening/closing operation of the electronic device, the center portion of the support portion **350** facing the FPCBs **226** and **227** may have curved (e.g., round) edge portions at both sides of a second face, thereby preventing the FPCBs **226** and **227** from being stamped due to interference between the edge portion and the FPCB.

**[0171]** FIG. 9 illustrates a state in which a hinge structure and a hinge housing are separated according to an embodiment. FIG. 10A illustrates a cross-sectional view, cut along the line A-A' of FIG. 9, of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 10B illustrates a hinge structure when an electronic device rotates from an unfolded state to a folded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 10C illustrates a cross-sectional view, cut along the line A-A of FIG. 9', of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment.

**[0172]** Referring to FIGS. 9 to 10C, an electronic device includes the hinge structure **300a**. The hinge structure **300a** includes the first bracket **311**, the second bracket **312**, a fixing bracket **313**, the first arm **321**, the second arm **322**, a first fixing portion **323**, a second fixing portion **324**, a support portion **350**, a first shaft **331** in which a first gear **331a** and a first spring **342** are coupled, a second shaft **332** in which a second gear **332a** and a second spring **343** are coupled, a first idle gear **333**, a second idle gear **334**, a shaft bracket **335**, a first auxiliary member **363**, and a second auxiliary member **364**. At least one of components of the aforementioned hinge structure **300a** may be identical or similar to at least one of components of the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. 4B, the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. 6, and/or the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. 7B, and redundant descriptions will be omitted hereinafter.

**[0173]** The first bracket **311** and the second bracket **312** may be mounted to a first groove **313a** and second groove **313b** constructed in the fixing bracket **313** so as to be supported by the fixing bracket **313**. The first bracket **311** may include a first rail portion **311a** constructed in a shape corresponding to the first groove **313a**, and the second bracket **312** may include a second rail portion **312a** constructed in a shape corresponding to the second groove **313b**. The first bracket **311** may rotate by sliding inside the first groove **313a** through the first rail portion **311a**, and the second bracket **312** may rotate by sliding inside the second groove **313b** through the second rail portion **312a**.

**[0174]** The first bracket **311** may be coupled to at least one region of a first housing to rotate in association with the first housing. The second bracket **312** may be coupled to at least one region of a second housing to rotate in association with the second housing. Through the aforementioned structure, the first bracket **311** may rotate within a specified range about a virtual first rotation axis L1, and the second bracket **312** may rotate within a specified range about a virtual second rotation axis L2 adjacent to the first rotation axis L1. The first bracket **311** may rotate within an angle range from

0° to an angle (e.g., 90°) at which the electronic device is in the folded state with respect to the +x axis, and the second bracket 312 may rotate within an angle range from 180° to an angle at which the electronic device is in the folded state with respect to the +x axis. When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the first bracket 311 and the second bracket 312 may be disposed to be horizontal to each other, and when the electronic device is in the folded state, the first bracket 311 and the second bracket 312 may be disposed to face each other.

[0175] The first arm 321 may be coupled to one region of the first shaft 331 to rotate together with the first shaft 331. The second arm 322 may be coupled to one region of the second shaft 332 adjacent to the first shaft 331 to rotate together with the second shaft 332. The first arm 321 may rotate about a rotation axis L3 (hereinafter, a “third rotation axis”) of the first shaft 331 due to the aforementioned coupling structure. In addition, the second arm 322 may rotate about a rotation axis L4 (hereinafter, a “fourth rotation axis”) of the second shaft 331. When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 may be disposed to be horizontal to each other, and when the electronic device is in the folded state, the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 may be disposed to face each other.

[0176] The first arm 321 and the second arm 322 may rotate by the same angle through the first gear 331a of the first shaft 331, the second gear 332a of the second shaft 332, the first idle gear 333, and the second idle gear 334.

[0177] When the first shaft 331 rotates by a specific angle, the first gear 331a may also rotate by the same angle. The rotation of the first gear 331a may be transferred to the first idle gear 333 engaged with the first gear 331a, and the rotation transferred to the first idle gear 333 may be transferred to the second gear 332a through the second idle gear 334 engaged with the first idle gear 333. The second shaft 332 may also rotate by a specific angle due to the rotation transferred to the second gear 332a. Through the aforementioned process, the first arm 321 coupled with the first shaft 331 and the second arm 322 coupled with the second shaft 332 may rotate by the same angle.

[0178] The first rotation axis L1 and the second rotation axis L2 may be constructed between the third rotation axis L3 and the fourth rotation axis L4. In addition, as the first rotation axis L1 and the second rotation axis L2 are constructed in an upper end region of the third rotation axis L3 and fourth rotation axis L4, the first rotation axis L1 and the second rotation axis L2 may be constructed on a flexible display. That is, the first bracket 311, the second bracket 312, the first arm 321, and the second arm 322 may rotate within a specified angle range about rotation axes different from one another.

[0179] According to an embodiment, the first bracket 311 may be coupled with one region of the first arm 321 through the first fixing portion 323, and the second bracket 312 may be coupled with one region of the second arm 322 through the second fixing portion 324.

[0180] A first slide hole 311b may be constructed in one region adjacent to the first arm 321 of the first bracket 311, and the first fixing portion 323 may pass through the first slide hole 311b to couple the first bracket 311 and the first arm 321. A second slide hole 312b may be constructed in one region adjacent to the second arm 322 of the second bracket

312, and the second fixing portion 324 may pass through the second slide hole 312b to couple the second bracket 312 and the second arm 322.

[0181] As the first bracket 311 rotates together with the first housing, the first fixing portion 323 may be slid inside the first slide hole 311b. Due to the sliding of the first fixing portion 323, the first arm 321 coupled with the first bracket 311 through the first fixing portion 323 may also be slid together. Similarly, due to the rotation of the second housing, the second fixing portion 324 may be slid inside the second slide hole 312b. Due to the sliding of the second fixing portion 324, the second arm 322 coupled with the second bracket 312 through the second fixing portion 324 may also be slid together.

[0182] When the electronic device in which the first bracket 311, the second bracket 312, the first arm 321, and the second arm 322 are disposed on the same plane is in the unfolded state, the first fixing portion 323 may be disposed outside the first slide hole 311b, and the second fixing portion 324 may be disposed outside the second slide hole 312b.

[0183] As illustrated in FIG. 10B, while the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the first housing and the second housing may rotate by a first angle (e.g., 30° with respect to the +x axis or the -x axis) by a user's manipulation or external force. As the first housing and the second housing rotate, the first bracket 311 and the second bracket 312 coupled to the first housing and the second housing may also rotate by the first angle.

[0184] While the first bracket 311 rotates counterclockwise, the first fixing portion 323 may be slid by a specific distance in an inward direction from the outside of the first slide hole 311b. The first arm 321 may rotate counterclockwise by a second angle greater than the first angle due to the sliding of the first fixing portion 323. The second arm 322 may rotate by the second angle clockwise due to the sliding of the second fixing portion 324.

[0185] When the electronic device is in the folded state, the first and second brackets 311 and 312 and the first and second arms 321 and 322 may be disposed to face each other in one face. The first bracket 311, the second bracket 312, the first arm 321, and the second arm 322 may be disposed to be substantially vertical to the +x axis or to have an angle (e.g., 80° to 100°) at which the electronic device is in the folded state. When the electronic device is in the folded state, the first fixing portion 323 may be disposed inside the first slide hole 311b, and the second fixing portion 324 may also be disposed inside the second slide hole 312b.

[0186] That is, the first fixing portion 323 may be slid in an inward direction from the outside of the first slide hole 311b while the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, and may be slid in an outward direction from the inside of the first slide hole 311b while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. The second fixing portion 324 may be slid in the same manner as the first fixing portion 323.

[0187] In an example, while the first bracket 311 and the second bracket 312 rotate about the virtual first rotation axis L1 and second rotation axis L2 by a user's manipulation or external force, the first fixing portion 323 and the second fixing portion 324 may be slid respectively inside the first slide hole 311b and the second slide hole 312b. Due to the sliding of the first fixing portion 323 and second fixing portion 324, the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 may

rotate about the third rotation axis L3 and the fourth rotation axis L4. As a result, the first arm 321 may rotate about a rotation axis (e.g., L3) different from the first bracket 311 due to the rotation of the first bracket 311. The second arm 322 may rotate about a rotation axis (e.g., L4) different from the second bracket 312 due to the rotation of the second bracket 312.

[0188] When the electronic device is in a 180-degree unfolded state, the support portion 350 may be in contact with an auxiliary member.

[0189] When the electronic device rotates from the 180-degree unfolded state to a folded state, the auxiliary members 363 and 364 may perform a rotation operation, and the state in which the support portion 350 is in contact with the auxiliary members 363 and 364 may be released (operation ①).

[0190] According to restoration force of the elastic member 361, the support portion 350 may move to a lower end through a push operation (operations ② and ③). The support portion 350 may move until it is in contact with a shaft bracket, and then the movement may be completed when in contact with the auxiliary members 363 and 364 (operation ④), i.e., when a closing operation of the electronic device is completed.

[0191] FIG. 11 illustrates a fixing portion and a detent structure of a hinge structure according to an embodiment.

[0192] Referring to FIG. 11, the hinge structure of an electronic device includes the first bracket, the second bracket, a fixing bracket, the first arm, the second arm, the first fixing portion, the second fixing portion, a first shaft 331 to which a first gear 331a is coupled, a second shaft 332 to which a second gear 332a is coupled, a first idle gear, a second idle gear, the detent structure 340, a support portion, a first auxiliary member 363, and a second auxiliary member 364. At least one of components of the hinge structure of FIG. 11 may be identical or similar to at least one of components of the hinge structures of FIG. 8, and redundant descriptions will be omitted hereinafter.

[0193] The first bracket 311 and the first arm 321 may be coupled through the first fixing portion 323 which passes through one region of the first bracket 311 and first arm 321. The second bracket 312 and the second arm 322 may be coupled through the second fixing portion 324 which passes through one region of the second bracket 312 and second arm 322. The first fixing portion 323 and the second fixing portion 324 may be constructed in a pin shape which extends in a longitudinal direction.

[0194] The hinge structure further includes a first elastic body and a second elastic body. In an embodiment, the first elastic body and the second elastic body may be a spring or a disk spring, but are not limited thereto.

[0195] The first elastic body may be disposed to an outer circumferential surface of the first fixing portion, and may be disposed in a compressed state between the first arm 321 and a first washer ring. Some regions of the first elastic body 323a may pass through some regions of the first arm 321, and may be disposed between the first arm 321 and the first washer ring 325. As the first elastic body 323a is disposed in a compressed state between the first arm 321 and the first washer ring 325, frictional force may be generated between the first arm 321 and the first bracket 311. A torque may be generated in a direction opposite to a rotation direction of the first arm 321 due to the frictional force generated between the first arm 321 and the first bracket 311, and a movement

of the first arm 321 may be fixed due to the generated torque. That is, the hinge structure may fix the movement of the first arm 321 in a free stop manner while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state without a separate additional component by using the first elastic body 323a.

[0196] The second elastic body 324a may be disposed to an outer circumferential surface of the second fixing portion 324, and may be disposed in a compressed state between the second arm 322 and a second washer ring. Some regions of the second elastic body 324a may pass through some regions of the second arm 322, and may be disposed between the second arm 322 and the second washer ring 326. As the second elastic body 324a is disposed in a compressed state between the second arm 322 and the second washer ring 326, frictional force may be generated between the second arm 322 and the second bracket 312. A torque may be generated in a direction opposite to a rotation direction of the second arm 322 due to the frictional force generated between the second arm 322 and the second bracket 312, and the movement of the second arm 322 may be fixed due to the generated torque. That is, the hinge structure 300a according to an embodiment may fix a movement of the second arm 322 while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state without a separate additional component by using the second elastic body 324a.

[0197] The detent structure 340 of the hinge structure 3 includes the detent plate 341, a first spring 342, and a second spring 343.

[0198] A shaft insertion hole may be constructed in at least one region of the detent plate 341, so that the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 are coupled to the detent plate 341. A diameter of the shaft insertion hole may be constructed to be greater than a diameter of the second shaft 332, so that the first shaft 331 and the second shaft 332 can freely rotate in a state of being coupled with the detent plate 341. The detent plate 341 includes a first detent portion 341a constructed to protrude along a longitudinal direction of the first shaft 331 and a second detent portion 341b constructed to protrude along a longitudinal direction of the second shaft 332. The first detent portion 341a may be disposed to be engaged with a first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321, and the second detent portion 341b may be disposed to be engaged with a second cam portion 322a of the second arm 322, so that the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 can provide a cam operation to the first arm 321 and the second arm 322.

[0199] The first spring 342 may be coupled with the first shaft 331 so as to be located between the detent plate 341 and a shaft bracket 335 supporting the first shaft 331. The second spring 343 may be coupled with the second shaft 332 adjacent to the first shaft 331, so as to be located between the detent plate 341 and the shaft bracket 335 supporting the second shaft 332.

[0200] The first spring 342 and the second spring 343 may be disposed in a compressed state to the shaft bracket 335 and the detent plate 341, and pressure may be applied to the shaft bracket 335 in a direction opposite to the detent plate 341 due to elastic restoration force of the first spring 342 and second spring 343. Due to the elastic restoration force of the first spring 342 and second spring 343, the first detent portion 341a and second detent portion 341b of the detent plate 341 may maintain a state of being engaged with the first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321 and the second

cam portion 322a of the second arm 322. With the rotation of the first arm 321 and second arm 322, the detent plate 341 may be temporarily spaced apart in a direction of the shaft bracket 335. The first spring 342 and the second spring 343 may be compressed due to the detent plate 341 being spaced apart. Due to elastic restoration force of the compressed first spring 342 and second spring 343, the detent plate 341 may move again in a direction of the first arm 321 and the second arm 322.

[0201] Even if the detent plate 341 is temporarily spaced apart from the first arm 321 and the second arm 322, the detent plate 341 may be in contact again with the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 by means of the first spring 342 and the second spring 343. The detent structure 340 may maintain an engagement state between the first detent portion 341a and the first cam portion 321a and between the second detent portion 341b and the second cam portion 322a through the aforementioned structure.

[0202] FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate a coupling relationship between an arm structure and a detent structure of a hinge structure according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. 12A illustrates a detached state, and FIG. 12B illustrates an assembled state.

[0203] Referring to FIGS. 12A and 12B, a hinge structure of an electronic device includes the first arm 321, the second arm 322, and the detent plate 341. The first arm 321 includes a first cam portion 321a and a first support rib 321b, and the second arm 322 includes a second cam portion 322a and a second support rib 322b. The first support rib 321b of the first arm 321 and the second support rib 322b of the second arm 322 may allow a support portion to move in an upper direction.

[0204] The first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321 and the second cam portion 322a of the second arm 322 may be constructed in a concavo-convex structure in which a peak A and a valley B appear repeatedly. The first arm 321 and the second arm 322 may be coupled with the detent plate 341, and thus may be disposed such that the first cam portion 321a is engaged with a first detent portion 341a, and the second cam portion 322a is engaged with a second detent portion 341b.

[0205] The detent plate 341 includes the first detent portion 341a constructed to protrude in a direction of the first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321 and the second detent portion 341b constructed to protrude in a direction of the second cam portion 322a of the second arm 322. The first detent portion 341a and the second detent portion 341b may be constructed in a concavo-convex structure in which a peak 'a' and a valley 'b' appear repeatedly. The peak and valley of the first detent portion 341a may be constructed in a shape corresponding to the peak and valley of the first cam portion 321a, and the peak and valley of the second detent portion 341b may be constructed in a shape corresponding to the peak and valley of the second cam portion 322a. The peak 'a' of the first detent portion 341a and the valley B of the first cam portion 321a may be disposed to correspond to each other, and the valley 'b' of the first detent portion 341a and the peak A of the first cam portion 321a may be disposed to correspond to each other, so that the first detent portion 341a and the first cam portion 321a are engaged with each other. Similarly, the peak of the second detent portion 341b and the valley of the second cam portion 322a may be disposed to correspond to each other, and the valley of the second detent portion 341b and the peak of the second cam

portion 322a may be disposed to correspond to each other, so that the second detent portion 341b and the second cam portion 322a are engaged with each other.

[0206] As the detent plate 341 is disposed such that the first cam portion 321a and the first detent portion 341a are engaged and the second cam portion 322a and the second detent portion 341b are engaged, the detent plate 341 may provide a cam operation to the first arm 321 and the second arm 322. A pitch between a peak (or valley) and peak (or valley) of the first detent portion 341a may be constructed to be longer than a pitch between a peak (or valley) and peak (or valley) of the first cam portion 321a, so that the first cam portion 321a rotates within a specified angle range even if it is in a state of being engaged with the first detent portion 341a. The pitch between the peak (or valley) or peak (or valley) of the first detent portion 341a may be constructed to be equal to the pitch between the peak (or valley) and peak (or valley) of the first cam portion 321a or may be constructed to be shorter than the pitch between the peak (or valley) and peak (or valley) of the first cam portion 321a. While the electronic device rotates from a folded state to an unfolded state or rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the peak of the first cam portion 321a of the first arm 321 may be engaged with the peak of the first detent portion 341a so that the first arm 321 and the detent plate 341 are temporarily spaced apart. While the peak of the first cam portion 321a is beyond the peak of the first detent portion 341a, the first detent portion 341a may provide a cam operation to the first arm 321. The second detent portion 341b may also provide a cam operation to the second arm 322 in the same or similar manner as the first detent portion 341a.

[0207] The first detent portion 341a and the second detent portion 341b may provide the cam operation to the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 and also fix a movement of the first arm 321 and second arm 322.

[0208] A flat linear region may be constructed in at least one region (e.g., a summit region) of the peak of the first cam portion 321a, the peak of the second cam portion 322a, the peak of the first detent portion 341a, and/or the peak of the second detent portion 341b. A flat linear region may also be constructed in at least one region of the valley of the first cam portion 321a, the valley of the second cam portion 322a, the valley of the first detent portion 341a, and/or the valley of the second detent portion 341b. The linear region constructed in one region of the peak and the linear region constructed in one region of the valley may be constructed to be substantially identical or similar. As the linear region is constructed in the peaks and valleys of the first cam portion 321, second cam portion 322a, first detent portion 341a, and second detent portion 341b, the movement of the first arm 321 and/or second arm 322 may be fixed at a specified rotation angle (e.g., 30° or 60°). As the movement of the first arm 321 and/or second arm 322 is fixed at the specified rotation angle, a movement of a first housing and second housing of the electronic device may be fixed at the specified rotation angle.

[0209] FIG. 13 illustrates a hinge structure according to an embodiment.

[0210] Referring to FIG. 13, the hinge structure 300a of an electronic device includes a first bracket 311, a second bracket 312, a first arm 321, a second arm 322, a first fixing portion 323, a second fixing portion 324, a first shaft 331 to which a first gear 331a is coupled, a second shaft 332 to

which a second gear 332a is coupled, a first idle gear 333, a second idle gear 334, a shaft bracket 335, a first spring 342, a second spring 343, a stopper 360, a first auxiliary member 363, and a second auxiliary member 364. At least one of components of the hinge structure 300a of FIG. 13 may be identical or similar to at least one of components of the hinge structure 300a or 300b of FIG. 6, and redundant descriptions will be omitted hereinafter.

[0211] The first arm 321 includes a first support rib 321b, and the second arm 322 includes a second support rib 322b. The first support rib 321b may be constructed to protrude from one region of the first arm 321. In addition, the second support rib 322b may be constructed to protrude from one region of the second arm 322. When the electronic device is in an unfolded state, the first support rib 321b may be constructed to protrude in a direction of the stopper 360 located between the first arm 321 and the second arm 322 from the first arm 321. Similarly, the second support rib 322b may be constructed to protrude in a direction of the stopper 360 from the second arm 322.

[0212] The first support rib 321b may be constructed integrally with the first arm 321, and may rotate along with a rotation of the first arm 321. The second support rib 322b may be constructed integrally with the second arm 322, and may rotate along with a rotation of the second arm 322. As the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b rotate together with the first arm 321 and the second arm 322, a support portion disposed on the stopper 360 may move in an upper direction (e.g., the +y direction). While the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state, at least one region of the first support rib 321b and second support rib 322b may be in contact with one region of the support portion (e.g., a rear face of the support portion).

[0213] As the first arm 321 rotates clockwise (e.g., the direction ①), the first support rib 321b may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction. As the second arm 322 rotates counterclockwise (e.g., the direction ②), the second support rib 322b may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction.

[0214] The first auxiliary member 363 may be coupled to one end of the first shaft 331 adjacent to the first arm 321, and the second auxiliary member 364 may be coupled to one end of the second shaft 332 of the second arm 322. The first auxiliary member 363 may be coupled to the first shaft 331 to rotate together with the first shaft 331. The second auxiliary member 364 may be coupled to the second shaft 332 to rotate together with the second shaft 332.

[0215] The first auxiliary member 363 includes a third support rib 363a constructed to protrude from one region of the first auxiliary member 363. The second auxiliary member 364 includes a fourth support rib 364a constructed to protrude from one region of the second auxiliary member 364. The third support rib 363a may be disposed at a position parallel to the first support rib 321b of the first arm 321, and the fourth support rib 364a may be disposed at a position parallel to the second support rib 322b of the second arm 322. The third support rib 363a may be spaced apart from the first support rib 321b to rotate by the same rotation angle as the first support rib 321b with the rotation of the first shaft 331. The fourth support rib 364a may be spaced apart from the second support rib 322b to rotate by the same rotation angle as the second support rib 322b with the rotation of the second shaft 332.

[0216] The third support rib 363a and the fourth support rib 364a may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state, similarly to the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b. The third support rib 363a and the fourth support rib 364a may be in contact with one region of the support portion 350 while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. As the first shaft 331 rotates clockwise (e.g., the direction ①), the third support rib 363a may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction. As the second shaft 332 rotates counterclockwise (e.g., the direction ②), the fourth support rib 364a may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction.

[0217] Accordingly, the hinge structure 300a may move the support portion 350 in an upper direction while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state through the first support rib 321b, the second support rib 322b, the third support rib 363a, and the fourth support rib 364a. Consequently, the support portion 350 can be in contact with a rear face of a flexible display, thereby preventing the flexible display from being sagged and/or damaged when the electronic device is in the unfolded state.

[0218] FIG. 14A illustrates a compressed state of an elastic member and first and second arms of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 14B illustrates an elongated state of an elastic member and first and second arms of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment.

[0219] Referring to FIGS. 14A and 14B, an electronic device includes a flexible display 220, a first support plate 221 supporting the flexible display 220, a second support plate 222, and the hinge structure 300a.

[0220] The hinge structure 300a includes a first bracket 311, a second bracket 312, a first arm 321, a second arm 322, a support portion 350, a stopper 360, an elastic member 361, and a screw 362.

[0221] The support portion 350 may move in a direction of a rear face of the flexible display 220 by using a first support rib 321b of the first arm 321 and a second support rib 322b of the second arm 322, when the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. Through the aforementioned process, the support portion 350 may support one region of the flexible display 220 that is not supported by the first arm 321 and the second arm 322, when the electronic device is in the unfolded state.

[0222] When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, a gap 'g' may be constructed between the support portion 350 and the first support rib 321b of the first arm 321 and the second support rib 322b of the second arm 322. When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, as the gap is constructed between the support portion 350 and the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b, the support portion 350 can be prevented from moving in a direction of the flexible display 220 by at least a specified distance. When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the gap between the support portion 350 and the first support rib 321b and the second support rib 322b may be constructed to be greater than a gap between a protrusion region E1 of a shaft bracket 355 or a protrusion region E2 of the stopper 360 and a fixing rib constructed in one region of the support portion 350. As a result, the support portion 350 can be prevented from moving in a duplicate manner in an upper



direction by the first support rib **321b** and the second support rib **322b**. That is, when the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the hinge structure **300a** can prevent the flexible display **220** from being damaged by the support portion **350** through the gap constructed between the support portion **350** and the first support rib **321b** and the second support rib **322b**.

[0223] The stopper **360** may be located at a lower end (e.g., the  $-y$  direction) of the support portion **350**, and a through-hole **360c** may be constructed in one region of the stopper **360**. An elastic support portion **3505** of the support portion **350** may be located at a lower end of the stopper **360** by passing through the through-hole **360c**, and the screw **362** may be coupled to the elastic support portion **3505** of the support portion **350** passing through the through-hole **360c**. An outer circumferential surface of one face of the screw **362** facing the elastic support portion **3505** may be constructed to be greater than an outer circumferential surface of the elastic support portion **3505**, so that the elastic member **361** is disposed between the stopper **360** and the screw **362**. The elastic member **361** may be a spring for example, but is not limited thereto.

[0224] One end of the elastic member **361** may be in contact with one region of the stopper **360** (e.g., a neighboring region of the through-hole **360c**), and the other end may be in contact with the screw **362** coupled to the protrusion region of the support portion **350**. The elastic member **361** may be compressed when the support portion **350** moves in an upper direction (e.g., the  $+y$  direction), or may be restored to its original state due to elastic restoration force.

[0225] As the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state, the support portion **350** moves in a direction of the flexible display **220**. The screw **362** coupled to the elastic support portion **3505** may also move in an upper direction (e.g., the  $+y$  direction) due to the movement of the support portion **350**, and the elastic member **361** may be compressed due to the upward movement of the screw **362**.

[0226] As the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the first arm **321** may rotate counterclockwise (e.g., the direction **②**), and the second arm **322** may rotate clockwise (e.g., the direction **①**), so that the first support rib **321b** and the second support rib **322b** are spaced apart from the support portion **350**. As the first support rib **321b** and second support rib **322b** are spaced apart from the support portion **350**, pressure may be applied to the screw **362** in a lower direction (e.g., the  $-y$  direction) due to elastic restoration force of the compressed elastic member **361**. Due to the pressure applied to the screw **362**, the screw **362** and the support portion **350** coupled with the screw **362** may move in a lower direction (e.g., the  $-y$  direction). That is, while the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the support portion **350** may be spaced apart from the flexible display **220** due to the elastic restoration force of the elastic member **361** located between the stopper **360** and the screw **362**.

[0227] Through the aforementioned driving process, the support portion **350** may not interrupt a rotation trajectory (or a "driving trajectory") of the flexible display **220** or the first support plate **221** and the second support plate **222** while the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state. However, when the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the support portion **350** may support one

region of the flexible display **220** that is not supported by the first arm **321** and the second arm **322**, thereby preventing the flexible display **220** from being damaged or sagged.

[0228] FIG. 15A illustrates a cross-sectional view, cut along the line B-B' of FIG. 10A, of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a **180-degree** unfolded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 15B illustrates a cross-section of a hinge assembly when an electronic device is in an unfolded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 15C illustrates a cross-sectional view, cut along the line B-B' of FIG. 10C, of a hinge structure when an electronic device is in a folded state according to an embodiment. FIG. 15D illustrates a cross-section of a hinge structure while an electronic device is folded according to an embodiment.

[0229] Referring to FIGS. 15A to 15D, a hinge structure **300b** of an electronic device includes a second bracket **312**, a fixing bracket **313**, a second arm **322**, a second fixing portion **324** coupling the second bracket **312** and the second arm **322**, a rotation structure **330** including a second shaft **332**, a second idle gear **334**, and a shaft bracket **335**, a support portion **350**, a stopper **360**, an elastic member **361**, and a screw **362**. At least one of components of the hinge structure **300b** of FIG. 15A may be identical or similar to at least one of components of the hinge structure **300a** or **300b** of FIG. 6, and redundant descriptions will be omitted hereinafter.

[0230] The support portion **350** may be located on the stopper **360**, and may include an elastic support portion **3505** and a fixing rib **3504**. The elastic support portion **3505** may be constructed to protrude in a lower direction (e.g., the  $-y$  direction) of the support portion **350**, and may be coupled with the screw **362** as described above to compress the elastic member **361** while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state. The fixing rib **3504** may be constructed to protrude in a lower direction of the elastic support portion **3505** similarly to the elastic support portion **3505**, and in a lateral view, may be constructed in a hook shape curved in a direction of the shaft bracket **335**.

[0231] The fixing rib **3504** may be fixed to one region of the shaft bracket **335** to prevent the support portion **350** from moving by at least a specified distance in an upper direction (e.g., the  $+y$  direction) or in a direction of a flexible display while the electronic device rotates from the folded state to the unfolded state.

[0232] The shaft bracket **335** includes a fixing region E1. The fixing region E1 may be constructed to protrude in a direction of the stopper **360** from one region of the shaft bracket **335**. As the electronic device rotates from the folded state, as illustrated in FIG. 15C, to the unfolded state, as illustrated in FIG. 15A, the support portion **350** may move in an upper direction, and the fixing rib **3504** of the support portion **350** may be in contact with the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335** due to the upward movement of the support portion **350**.

[0233] When the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the hook-shaped fixing rib **3504** may be in contact with a lower region of the fixing region E1 so that the fixing rib **3504** of the support portion **350** is caught at the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335**. When the support portion **350** moves in an upper direction by at least a specified distance, pressure may be applied in the upper direction to the flexible display disposed to an upper end of the support portion **350**, and some regions of the flexible display may be damaged due to the pressure applied by the support portion **350**. When

the electronic device is in the unfolded state, the fixing rib **3504** of the support portion **350** may be disposed to be in contact with the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335** without a gap, so that the support portion **350** can be prevented from moving in the upper direction by at least a specified distance.

[0234] When the electronic device rotates from the unfolded state to the folded state, the support portion **350** may move in a lower direction (e.g., the  $-y$  direction) due to elastic restoration force of the elastic member **361** as described above. Accordingly, the fixing rib **3504** may be spaced apart from the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335**. As the fixing rib **3504** is spaced apart from the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335**, the support portion **350** may move in a lower direction without being affected by the fixing region E1. That is, the hinge structure **300b** may control the movement of the support portion **350** so that the support portion **350** moves in an upper direction within a specified range through the fixing rib **3504** of the support portion **350** and the fixing region E1 of the shaft bracket **335**.

[0235] FIG. 16 illustrates a hinge assembly fastened to an unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment.

[0236] Referring to FIG. 16, an electronic device includes the hinge assembly **300**. The hinge assembly **300** include hinge structures **300a** and **300b**.

[0237] The hinge housing **300c** includes a recess to which the hinge structures **300a** and **300b** can be disposed. The hinge structures **300a** and **300b** may be disposed inside the recess of the hinge assembly **300**, and the hinge structures **300a** and **300b** may be supported by the hinge housing **300c**.

[0238] The hinge assembly **300** includes the first hinge structure **300a** disposed to one region of the hinge housing **300c** and the second hinge structure **300b** disposed to another region of the hinge housing **300c**. The first hinge structure **300a** may be disposed to the left region of the hinge housing **300c**, and thus may be coupled (or “connected”) to one region of a first housing and second housing. The second hinge structure **300b** may be disposed to the right region of the hinge housing **300c**, and thus may be coupled (or “connected”) to the first housing and the second housing. The first hinge structure **300a** and the second hinge structure **300b** may rotate within a specified angle range about a virtual first rotation axis (e.g., L1) constructed in the hinge housing **300c** and a virtual second rotation axis L2 parallel to the virtual first rotation axis L1. One region of the first hinge structure **300a** and one region of the second hinge structure **300b** may rotate about the first rotation axis L1, and another region of the first hinge structure **300a** and another region of the second hinge structure **300b** may rotate about the virtual second rotation axis L2. That is, the first hinge structure **300a** and the second hinge structure **300b** may be folded about the virtual first rotation axis L1 and second rotation axis L2, and details thereof will be described below. However, the hinge assembly **300** is not limited to the aforementioned embodiment, and the hinge assembly **300** may include three or more hinge structures.

[0239] The hinge assembly **300** further includes first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** disposed between the first hinge structure **300a** and the second hinge structure **300b**. The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be fastened respectively to first and second housing **211** and **212**, and may support at least some regions of a flexible display. The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e**

may be constructed of a metal or non-metal material having a specified rigidity to support the flexible display.

[0240] The first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b** may be disposed at both sides, e.g., left and right sides, with respect to the support portion **350**. The first and second hinge plates **300e** and **300d** may be disposed at upper and lower sides with the support portion **350**. The first and second arms **321** and **322** and the first and second brackets **311** and **312** may be disposed respectively at upper and lower sides with respect to both ends of the support portion **350**.

[0241] When the electronic device is unfolded by 180 degrees, movement members, e.g., a cam or a hinge spring, of the first and second hinge structures **300a** and **300b**, may be covered respectively by first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** of the first and second hinge plates.

[0242] The support portion **350** is assembled with a cap ‘c’, so that the first face **350a** of the support portion and an upper face of the cap ‘c’ are in a co-planar state. In this state, the first face **350a** of the support portion may support a folding region of the flexible display to be flat.

[0243] FIG. 17A illustrates a mounting state of a support portion according to an embodiment. FIG. 17B illustrates a perspective view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line C-C'. FIG. 17C illustrates a cross-sectional view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line C-C'.

[0244] Referring to FIGS. 17A to FIG. 17C, a center portion **3501** of a support portion **350** may be a portion in which operational interference may occur due to a movement of an FPCB **226** for electrically coupling first and second electronic components disposed respectively to first and second housings. In an opening/closing operation of the electronic device, one portion of the FPCB **226** may be folded or unfolded in a space between a hinge housing **300c** and the center portion **3501**. The FPCB **226** may move in the space in the folding and unfolding operation, and the FPCB **226** may be interfered with neighboring adjacent portions, e.g., an edge portion of first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e**, according to the movement.

[0245] When a width ‘w’ of the center portion **3501** is increased to safely support a flexible display, there is a risk in that one portion p1 of the FPCB is stamped (e.g., disconnected). To prevent this, the width ‘w’ of the center portion **3501** may be limited, and the width ‘w’ may be determined by considering a movement trajectory of the FPCB **226** to be folded, in an operation of folding or unfolding the electronic device. For example, the width ‘w’ of the center portion **3501** may be approximately 2 mm.

[0246] An element that can limit the width ‘w’ of the center portion is a distance between first and second rotation axes located at both sides, and the width ‘w’ may be less than a distance between the first and second rotation axes.

[0247] The center portion **3501** may have a limited thickness ‘t’. The thickness ‘t’ of the center portion **3501** may be determined by considering a movement trajectory of the FPCB which is folded or bent in an operation of folding or unfolding the electronic device. For example, the thickness ‘t’ of the center portion **3501** may be approximately 1 mm.

[0248] Edge portions **3501c** (e.g., corner portions) of the center portion **3501** may be curved. When folding or unfolding the electronic device, operational interference occurs between both edge portions **3501c** and the FPCB **226**, and

thus the FPCB may be stamped or disconnected. To prevent this, the edge portions **3501c** at a lower side of the center portion **3501** may be curved. For example, each of the edge portions **3501c** may have a curvature.

[0249] FIG. 18 illustrates a cross-sectional view of the support portion of FIG. 17A, cut along the line D-D'.

[0250] Referring to FIG. 18, a center portion **3501** and a hinge housing **300c** facing the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be constructed by considering a movement trajectory of the center portion **3501** and edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** adjacent to the center portion **3501**. The hinge housing **300c** includes a first opening **3000c** considering a movement trajectory of the center portion **3501** and a second opening **3001c** considering a movement trajectory of the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the hinge plate.

[0251] When the electronic device moves from a folded state to an unfolded state or moves from the unfolded state to the folded state, the center portion **3501** may move limitedly in a direction closer to or away from the hinge housing **300c**, and the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the first and second hinge plates may perform a rotation movement. The first and second openings **3000c** and **3001c** of the hinge housing may be constructed by considering a movement space of the center portion **3501** and a space of a rotation movement of an edge portion of an FPCB plate. For example, the first opening **3000c** has a recess shape, and extends along a direction in which the hinge housing **300c** extends. The second opening **3001c** has a recess shape, and is constructed to have a smaller depth than a recessed depth of the first opening **3000c**. A stepped portion **3002c** may be constructed between the first and second openings **3000c** and **3001c**. The first opening **3000c** may have the second opening **3001c** at both sides, and the second opening **3001c** may be constructed in a symmetric manner.

[0252] From a perspective of the presence or absence of the center portion **3501**, since a distance between the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the first and second hinge plates is increased due to the center portion **3501**, a trajectory drawn by the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** may be decreased depending on the operation of opening/closing the electronic device. Therefore, a depth of the opening **3001c** constructed at the hinge housing **300c** is decreased, and a support structure of the support portion **350** capable of supporting the flexible display is extendable to the maximum extent possible. Accordingly, a support section is also movable inwardly, thereby securing rigidity of the hinge housing **300c** and extending the support section.

[0253] FIGS. 19A to 19C illustrate a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. 19A illustrates a 180-degree unfolded state, FIG. 19B illustrates an approximately 90-degree open state, and FIG. 19C illustrates a folded state.

[0254] Referring to FIG. 19A, when the electronic device is in an unfolded state, a center portion **3501** may be located outside a first opening **3000c**, and edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be located inside the second opening **3001c**. The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be supported by the hinge housing **300c**. When the electronic device is unfolded by 180 degrees, each of the first and second plates **300d** and **300e** is in a parallel state, and the hinge housing **300c** may be a support structure of the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** in the parallel state.

[0255] Referring to FIG. 19B, when the electronic device is in an approximately 90-degree unfolded state, the center portion **3501** may be located in the first opening **3000c**, and the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the first and second hinge plates may be slightly detached from the second opening **3001c**. The edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the respective first and second hinge plates may perform a rotation operation along the second opening **3001c**.

[0256] Referring to FIG. 19C, when the electronic device is in a folded state, the center portion **3501** may be located in the first opening **3000c**, and the edge portions **3000d** and **3000e** of the first and second hinge plates may be completely detached from the second opening **3001c**. The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be free from interference of the hinge housing **300c**.

[0257] FIG. 20A illustrates a mounting state of first and second hinge plates in a 180-degree unfolded electronic device according to an embodiment. FIG. 20B illustrates an enlarged view of a protrusion portion mounted to a support groove of FIG. 20A. FIG. 20C illustrates a cross-sectional view illustrating a state of FIG. 20B, cut along the line E-E'. FIGS. 20D and 20E illustrate perspective views of states of first and second hinge plates, in a folded electronic device according to an embodiment.

[0258] Referring to FIGS. 20A to 20E, a hinge assembly **300** includes first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e**. The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be a member for covering some components, e.g., a hinge spring and a hinge cam, of the hinge structure to prevent interference of a cam operation and for supporting the flexible display in a closed state or an open state.

[0259] The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be fastened respectively to first and second housings by a fastener, and the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may support some regions of a flexible display. The first and second plates **300d** and **300e** may be constructed of a metal or non-metal material having a specified rigidity to support the flexible display.

[0260] The first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** respectively include first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e**.

[0261] The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be supported by one portion of a support portion **350** when the flexible display is unfolded by 180 degrees, and may be mounted to one portion of first and second arms **321** and **322** when the flexible display is folded.

[0262] The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be constructed in pair symmetrically with respect to the first hinge plate **300d**, and may be constructed in pair symmetrically with respect to the second hinge plate **300e**. Each of the first and second protrusions **3001d** and **3001e** may protrude toward the support portion **350**.

[0263] When the electronic device is a 180-degree open state, the support portion **350** may have at least one support groove **3503** constructed to mount the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e**, and when the electronic device is in a closed state, the first and second arms **321** and **322** may have at least one or more mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** to respectively mount the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e**. The mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** may be constructed to prevent unnecessary interference in a folded state of the electronic

device. The mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** may be escape grooves of the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e**.

[0264] The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be supported by the support portion **350** by being mounted to the support groove **3503** of the support portion **350** in a 180-degree unfolded state, and may be mounted by the mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** constructed at first and second arms in a folded state. The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may overlap the support portion **350** having the support groove **3503** in the 180-degree unfolded state, and may overlap respectively with the first and second arms **321** and **322** having the mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** in the folded state. The support groove **3503** may serve as a support of the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e**. In the 180-degree unfolded state of the electronic device, the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may be stably supported, and thus the flexible display may also be stably supported.

[0265] Because a support structure of the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** and the support groove **3503** is located above a hinge spring and a hinge cam, operational interference with the flexible display may be prevented by being covered due to the support structure when the hinge spring is compressed or elongated, which occurs in the opening/closing operation of the electronic device.

[0266] FIG. 20F illustrates operations of a hinge plate when an electronic device rotates from a closed state to an open state according to an embodiment.

[0267] Referring to FIG. 20F, when the electronic device is in an approximately 90-degree unfolded state, the support portion **350** may be separated from the auxiliary member.

[0268] When the electronic device rotates from a 90-degree unfolded state to a 180-degree unfolded state, the auxiliary members **363** and **364** may perform a rotation operation, and the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** may perform a rotation operation (operations ① and ②).

[0269] The support portion **350** may move to an upper end by a push operation of the auxiliary members **363** and **364** (operation ③).

[0270] After the first and second hinge plates **300d** and **300e** are in contact with the support portion **350**, the movement may be complete (operation ④). The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be mounted to the support groove **3503**.

[0271] FIGS. 21A to 21C illustrate a support state between first and second protrusion portions and a support portion in a process of opening/closing an electronic device according to an embodiment. Specifically, FIG. 21A illustrates a 180-degree unfolded state, FIG. 21B illustrates a 90-degree folded state, and FIG. 20C illustrates a folded state.

[0272] Referring to FIG. 21A, when an electronic device is in a 180-degree open state, first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be mounted to a support groove **3503**, and may maintain a mounting state. For example, the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** and the support groove **3503** may be constructed in substantially corresponding shapes. In the 180-degree open state, when the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** are mounted to the support groove **3503**, an outer surface of each of the first and second protrusion portions

**3001d** and **3001e** may be in a co-planar state with respect to a first face of a support portion **350**.

[0273] Referring to FIG. 21B, when the electronic device is in an approximately 45-degree open state, the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be disposed to be inclined with respect to the support portion **350** by being detached from the support groove **3503**, and may move downwardly by means of an elastic body of the support groove **3503**. The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be separated respectively from mounting grooves **3210** and **3220** of the first and second arms.

[0274] Referring to FIG. 21C, when the electronic device is in a closed state, the first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may be disposed in a vertical direction with respect to the support groove **3503**, and may be mounted to the mounting grooves **3210** and **3220**. The first and second protrusion portions **3001d** and **3001e** may maintain being supported by the mounting grooves **3210** and **3220**.

[0275] FIG. 22A illustrates a cap fastened to a fastening portion of a support portion according to an embodiment. FIG. 22B illustrates a cross-sectional view cut along the line G-G' of FIG. 22A. FIG. 22C illustrates a perspective view of a cap according to an embodiment.

[0276] Referring to FIGS. 22A to 22C, a cap 'c' may be coupled to a fastening portion **3502** of a support portion **350**. For example, as a fastening hole, the fastening portion **3502** may include a first stepped portion **35021**. The cap 'c' has a cap shape corresponding to the fastening portion **3502** and includes a second stepped portion **c1**. When coupled to the fastening portion **3502**, a first face **350a** of the support portion **350** and an upper face **c2** of the cap 'c' may be in a co-planar state. While folding or unfolding the electronic device, since the first face **350a** of the support portion **350** and the upper face **c2** of the cap are in the co-planar state, the folding region of a flexible display may be supported when in a 180-degree unfolded state. For example, the cap 'c' may be a support structure of the flexible display.

[0277] FIG. 23A illustrates tape attached to a first face of a support portion according to an embodiment. FIG. 23B illustrates a cross-sectional view cut along the line F-F' of FIG. 20A of tape attached to a first face of a support portion according to an embodiment.

[0278] Referring to FIGS. 23A and 23B, an adhesive layer 'b', e.g., tape, may be additionally attached to a first face **350a** of a support portion **350**. The adhesive layer 'b' may be manufactured in the same shape as the first surface **350a** and may be attached to the entirety of the first face **350a**. At least one opening **3507** constructed on the first face **350a** of the support portion **350** may be covered by the adhesive layer 'b', and the adhesive layer 'b' covering the at least one opening **3507** may provide a co-planar state, thereby supporting the flexible display. The adhesive layer attached to the first face **350a** may be part of a support structure. The adhesive layer 'b' may cover a minute gap which may be produced when a fastening portion **3502** of the support portion **350** is fastened with the cap 'c'.

[0279] While the disclosure has been particularly shown and described with reference to certain embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art that various changes in form and details may be made

therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure as defined by the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

**1.** An electronic device, comprising:

- a first housing including at least one first electronic component;
- a second housing including at least one second electronic component;
- a hinge housing disposed between the first housing and the second housing;
- a hinge structure configured to rotatably couple the first housing and the second housing;
- a flexible printed circuit board electrically coupling the first electronic component and the second electronic component via the hinge housing;
- a flexible display disposed from at least one region of the first housing to at least one region of the second housing across the hinge structure;
- a first hinge plate coupled to the first housing and moving as the first housing moves; and
- a second hinge plate coupled to the second housing and moving as the second housing moves,

wherein the hinge structure comprises:

- a support portion located between the flexible printed circuit board and the flexible display, wherein, in an unfolded state, at least part of the support portion is disposed between the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate,
- a first bracket coupled to the first housing and rotating as the first housing rotates about a first rotation axis; and
- a second bracket coupled to the second housing and rotating as the second housing rotates about a second rotation axis,

wherein, in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the support portion, the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate support at least one region of the flexible display in a state that the first hinge plate is at least partially supported by a first area of the support portion and the second hinge plate is at least partially supported by a second area of the support portion opposite to the first area, and

wherein, in a folded state of the electronic device, the support portion is spaced apart from the first hinge plate and the second hinge plate.

**2.** The electronic device of claim **1**,

- wherein the support portion has a bar shape, wherein the bar shaped support portion comprises:
  - a first side facing the flexible display; and
  - a second side opposite to the first side and facing the flexible printed circuit board, and

wherein in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the folding region of the flexible display is supported flatly by the first side of the support portion.

**3.** The electronic device of claim **1**,

wherein the hinge structure further comprises:

- a first shaft corresponding to a third rotation axis when the first bracket is rotated;
- a second shaft corresponding a fourth rotation axis when the second bracket is rotated;
- a first arm rotating about the third rotation axis; and
- a second arm rotating about the fourth rotation axis.

**4.** The electronic device of claim **3**,

wherein at least one side of the first arm is coupled to at least one region of the first bracket, and wherein at least one side of the second arm is coupled to at least one region of the second bracket.

**5.** The electronic device of claim **3**,

wherein the first arm comprises a first support rib and the second arm comprises a second support rib, and wherein, in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the support portion is supported by the first support rib and the second support rib.

**6.** The electronic device of claim **5**,

wherein the first support rib and the second support rib are configured to move the support portion in a direction toward the flexible display, when the first housing and the second housing rotate such that a state of the housing is changed from the folded state to the unfolded state.

**7.** The electronic device of claim **6**,

wherein the first shaft comprises a first auxiliary member rotating about the third rotation axis and comprising a third support rib, and

wherein the second shaft comprises a second auxiliary member rotating about the fourth rotation axis and comprising a fourth support rib.

**8.** The electronic device of claim **7**,

wherein the third support rib and the fourth support rib are configured to move the support portion in the direction toward the flexible display, when the first housing and the second housing rotate such that the state of the housing is changed from the folded state to the unfolded state.

**9.** The electronic device of claim **3**,

wherein the hinge structure further comprises a detent plate coupled to the first shaft and the second shaft, wherein the first arm comprises a first cam portion, and wherein the second arm comprises a second cam portion, and

wherein the first cam portion of the first arm and the second cam portion of the second arm are fixed with the detent plate at an angle formed by the first housing and the second housing.

**10.** The electronic device of claim **9**,

wherein the detent plate comprises a first detent portion protruding toward the first cam portion of the first arm and a second detent portion protruding toward the second cam portion of the second arm, and

wherein, at the angle formed by the first housing and the second housing, the first cam portion is disposed to be engaged with the first detent portion and the second cam portion is disposed to be engaged with the second detent portion.

**11.** The electronic device of claim **9**,

wherein the detent plate comprises a first hole and a second hole, and

wherein the first shaft is coupled to the detent plate through the first hole and the second shaft is coupled to the detent plate through the second hole.

**12.** The electronic device of claim **1**,

wherein the support portion comprises grooves, wherein the first hinge plate comprises a first protrusion portion and the second hinge plate comprises a second protrusion portion, and

wherein, in the unfolded state of the electronic device, the first protrusion portion and the second protrusion portion are mounted on the grooves.

**13.** The electronic device of claim **12**,

wherein the first arm comprises a first mounting groove and the second arm comprises a second mounting groove, and

wherein, in the folded state of the electronic device, the first protrusion portion is mounted on the first mounting groove and the second protrusion portion is mounted on the second mounting groove.

**14.** The electronic device of claim **1**,

wherein the hinge structure further comprises a fixing bracket disposed on the hinge housing and supporting the first bracket and the second bracket,

wherein the fixing bracket comprises a first groove and a second groove, and

wherein the first bracket is coupled to the first groove and the second bracket is coupled to the second groove.

**15.** The electronic device of claim **14**,

wherein the first bracket comprises a first rail portion formed in a shape corresponding to the first groove,

wherein the second bracket comprises a second rail portion formed in a shape corresponding to the second groove,

wherein the first bracket rotates through the first rail portion, and

wherein the second bracket rotates through the second rail portion.

\* \* \* \* \*