

EXHIBIT 3



US007672470B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Lee

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 7,672,470 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 2, 2010**

(54) **AUDIO/VIDEO DEVICE HAVING A VOLUME CONTROL FUNCTION FOR AN EXTERNAL AUDIO REPRODUCTION UNIT BY USING VOLUME CONTROL BUTTONS OF A REMOTE CONTROLLER AND VOLUME CONTROL METHOD THEREFOR**

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(75) Inventor: **Jae-hoon Lee**, Seoul (KR)

(73) Assignee: **Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.**,
Suwon-si (KR)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1211 days.

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Primary Examiner—Vivian Chin

Assistant Examiner—Douglas J Suthers

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Sughrue Mion, PLLC

(21) Appl. No.: **10/849,137**

(22) Filed: **May 20, 2004**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2005/0111675 A1 May 26, 2005

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Nov. 21, 2003 (KR) 10-2003-0082851

(51) **Int. Cl.**

H04R 1/02	(2006.01)
H04R 1/10	(2006.01)
H03G 7/00	(2006.01)
H02B 1/00	(2006.01)
H04R 5/02	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **381/333**; 381/74; 381/104;
381/105; 381/123; 381/306

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 381/104,
381/105, 123, 85, 333, 332, 306, 74, 107,
381/109

See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An audio/video (A/V) device having a volume control function for external audio reproduction units by using volume control buttons of a remote controller is provided. The A/V device includes speakers, an audio output port for externally outputting an audio signal, an audio signal processing unit for reproducing and amplifying the audio signal and applying the amplified audio signal to the speakers or the audio output port, a memory unit for storing volume control values, and a control unit for applying to the audio signal processing unit any of the volume control values stored in the memory based on whether the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port. The control unit controls the audio signal processing unit to adjust the volume control values for the audio output port by the volume control buttons when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port.

16 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

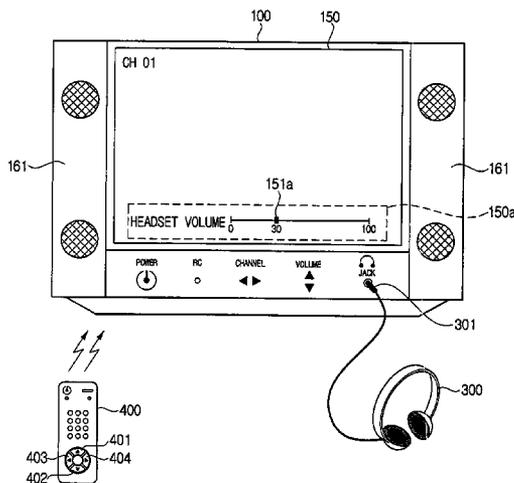


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

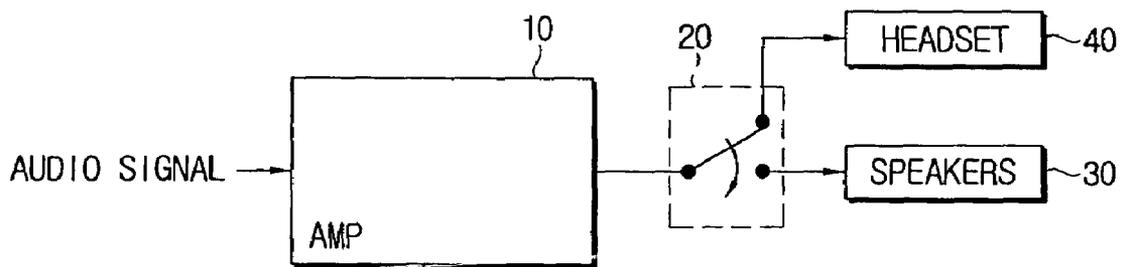


FIG. 2A
(PRIOR ART)

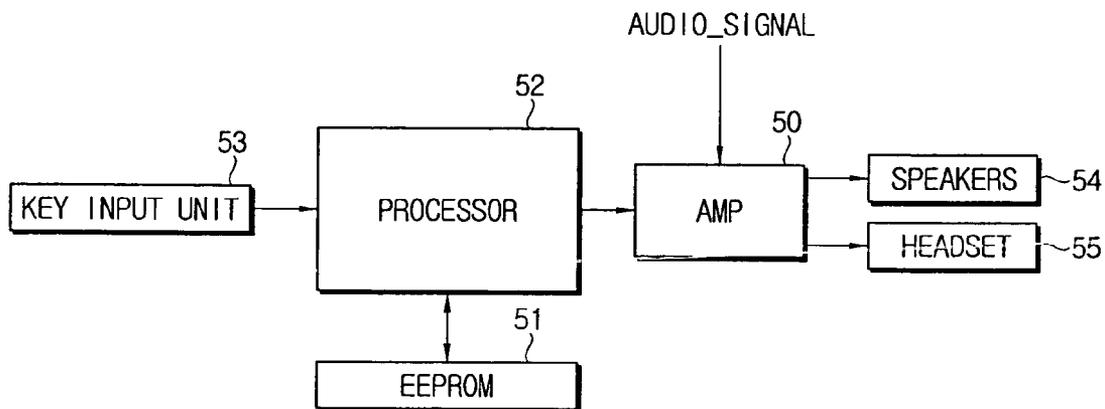


FIG. 2B
(PRIOR ART)

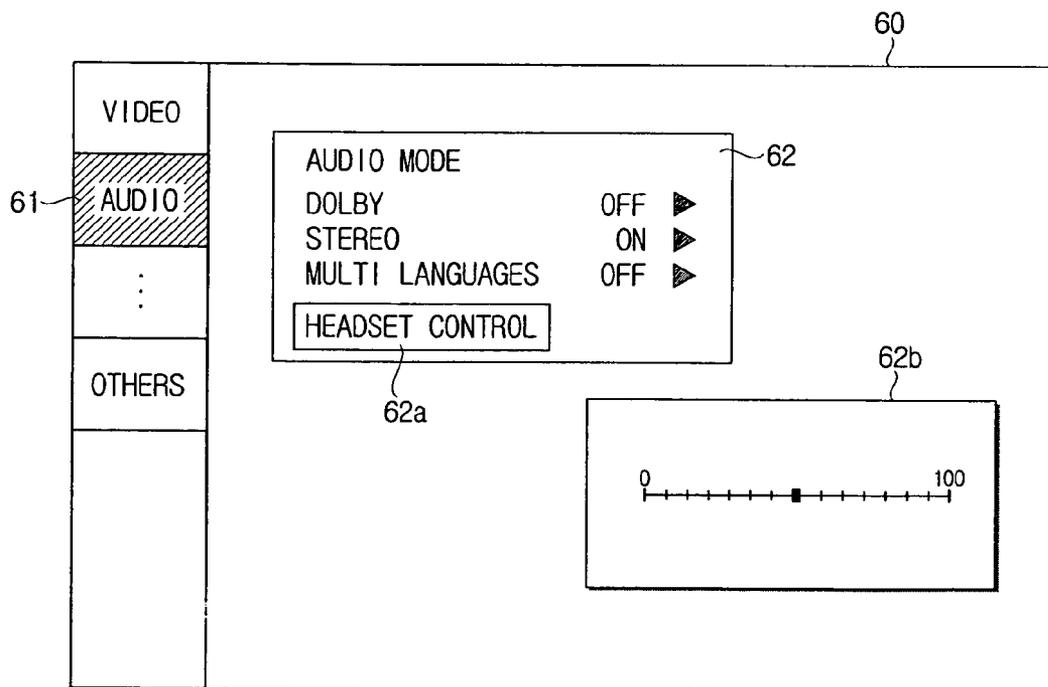


FIG. 3

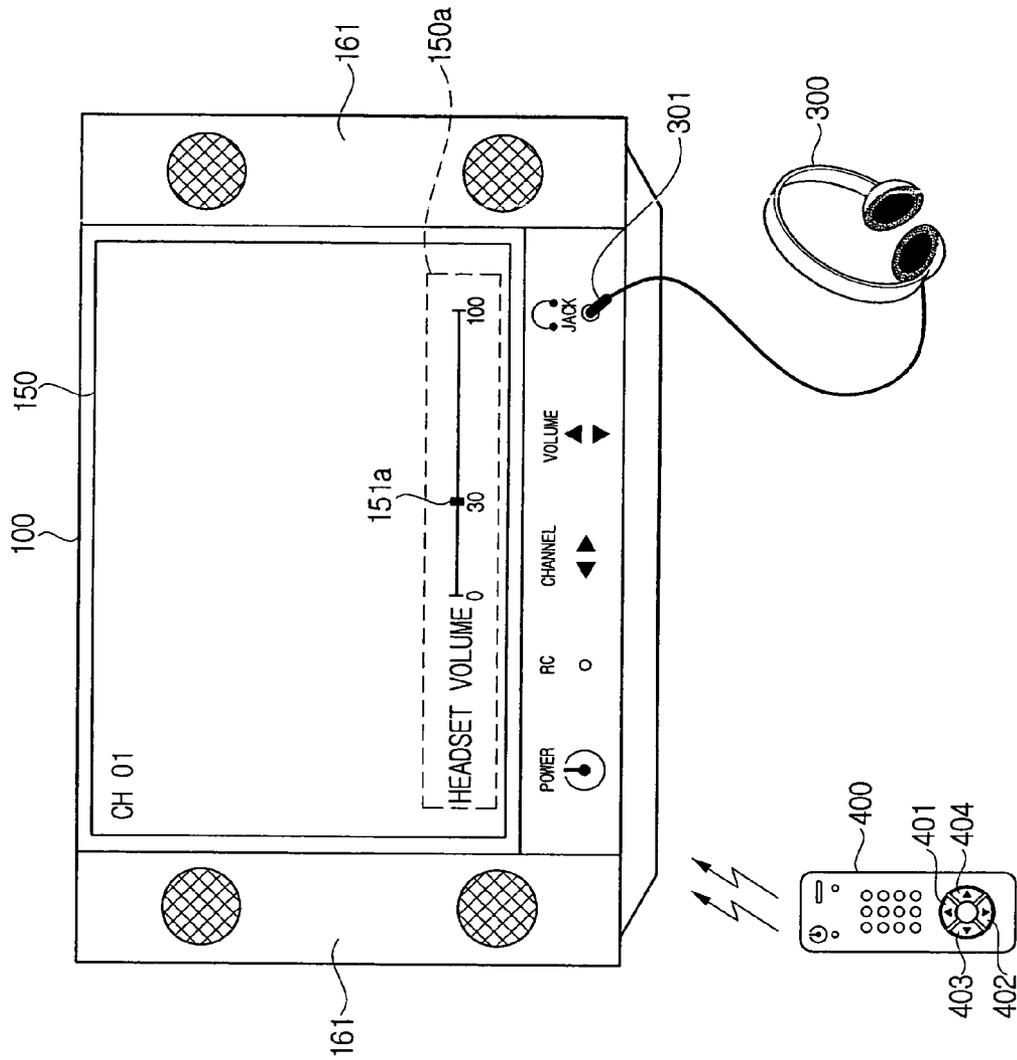


FIG. 4

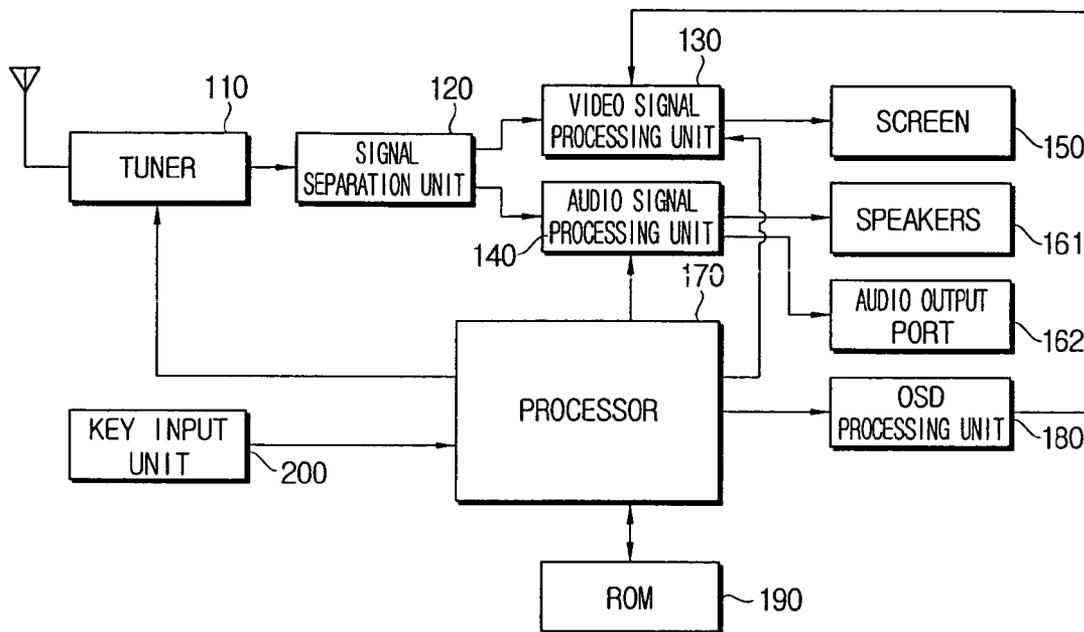


FIG. 5A

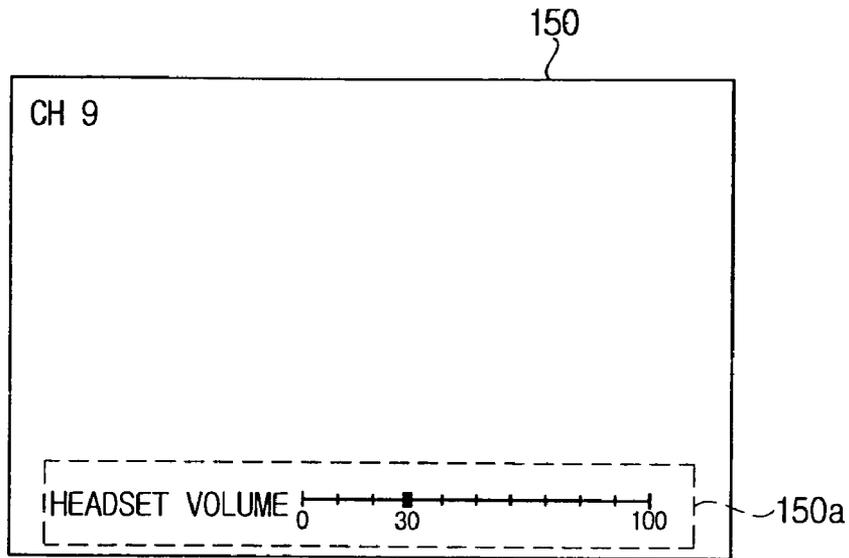


FIG. 5B

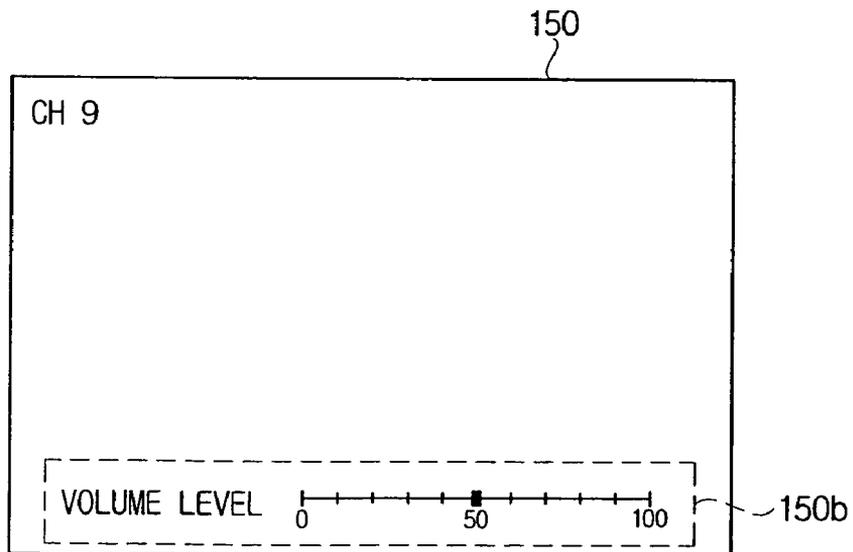
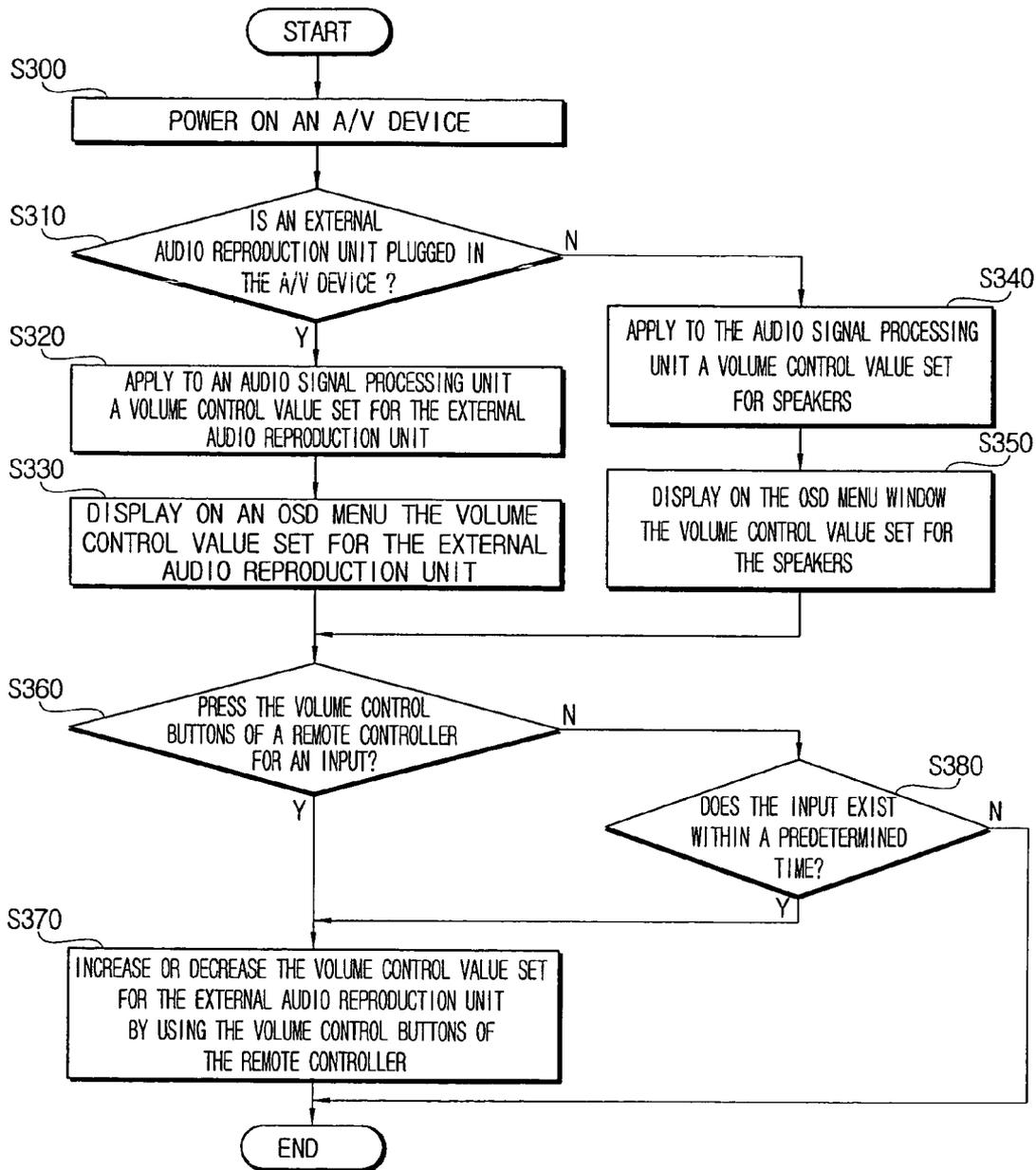


FIG. 6



AUDIO/VIDEO DEVICE HAVING A VOLUME CONTROL FUNCTION FOR AN EXTERNAL AUDIO REPRODUCTION UNIT BY USING VOLUME CONTROL BUTTONS OF A REMOTE CONTROLLER AND VOLUME CONTROL METHOD THEREFOR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C § 119 from Korean patent Application No. 2003-82851, filed on Nov. 21, 2003, the entire content of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a volume control method for audio/video devices and an audio/video device using the method. More particularly, the present invention relates to a volume control method for audio/video devices and an audio/video device, capable of controlling the volume of an external audio reproduction unit by use of volume control buttons of a remote controller without a separate On-screen display (OSD) menu window when the external audio reproduction unit such as an earphone, a headset, or speakers is plugged in.

2. Description of the Related Art

In general, the audio/video (A/V) device such as a television set, a projection TV, an LCD TV, and a home theater reproduces an audio signal through built-in speakers when receiving and reproducing the broadcast signal, and the A/V device controls its volume by use of a remote controller for controlling the speakers. When a user wants to listen to a broadcast by plugging an external audio reproduction unit such as a headset or an earphone in an A/V device, he or she can not directly control the volume level for the external audio reproduction unit by using the volume control buttons of a remote controller, but controls the volume level for the external audio reproduction unit on an OSD menu window provided on the A/V device.

FIG. 1 illustrates an audio reproduction unit of a conventional A/V device, which conceptually depicts connections of speakers and an external audio reproduction unit.

The audio reproduction unit of an A/V device has an amplification unit 10 for amplifying an input audio signal, a switch 20 for switching an output of the amplification unit 10, and speakers 30. An audio signal output from the amplification unit 10 is reproduced through the speakers 30 or a headset 40. The switch 20 is built in a headphone jack constructed to generally disconnect the amplification unit 10 with the speakers 30 when the headset 40 is plugged in the A/V device. That is, when the male connector of a headset 40 is inserted into the headphone jack, the amplification unit 10 and the speakers 30 are disconnected from each other, and an audio signal output from the amplification unit 10 is applied to the headset 40. When the male connector is not inserted into the headphone jack, the output signal of the amplification unit 10 is applied only to the speakers 30. The audio reproduction unit constructed as above applies an audio signal to the speakers 30 and the headset 40 in the same signal level. In general, the speakers 30 have the impedance of 4Ω~8Ω, whereas the headset 40 has the impedance of 16Ω~32Ω. Accordingly, when the volume level set for the speakers 30 is applied to the headset 40, an audio signal is reproduced by the headset 40 and the speakers 30 in a different volume level. As a result, a viewer is inconvenienced not only in properly controlling the

volume level whenever plugging the headset in an A/V device, but also in setting the volume level for the speakers 30 again when releasing the headset 40 from the A/V device.

FIG. 2A is a view illustrating another audio reproduction unit provided in a conventional A/V device.

The audio reproduction unit shown in FIG. 2A partially solves the problem of the audio reproduction unit shown in FIG. 1. That is, the audio reproduction unit solves the problem of separately setting the volume levels of the speakers and the headset, which is characterized in that volume values on speakers 54 and a headset 55 are stored in an electrically erasable and programmable read only memory (EEPROM) 51. A viewer sends a control signal for channel changes to the key input unit 53 by using a remote controller, and the key input unit 53 receives and applies the control signal to the processor 52, and the processor 52 responds to the control signal and controls to change channels broadcasted from a tuner. The audio reproduction unit enables a processor 52 to detect the plugging of a headset 55 into an amplification unit 50 and apply a volume value for the headset 55 to the amplification unit 50, so as to enable the amplification unit 50 to output an audio signal in a proper volume level when a viewer plugs or unplugs the headset 55 into or from the output port of the amplification unit 50. The A/V device having the audio reproduction unit stores in the EEPROM 51 the latest volume values, that is, the latest volume values for the speakers 54 and the headset 55 that a viewer sets to the A/V device.

However, even though the volume values for the headset 55 is stored in the EEPROM 51, the viewer loads a separate OSD menu window on a display unit (not shown) of the A/V device, and increases or decreases the volume value set for the headset 55 on the display unit, when the viewer wants to change the volume value.

FIG. 2B is a view illustrating a volume-setting process for the headset 55 of the A/V device of FIG. 2A.

To control the volume level for the headset 55 shown in FIG. 2A, the viewer has the OSD menu window 60 displayed on the display unit, and adjusts the volume level with an input device such as a remote controller (not shown). In the OSD menu window 60, the viewer chooses an Audio menu 61 and a headset adjustment option 62a for adjusting the volume level for a headset, and increases or decreases the volume level of the headset 55 through a volume control menu window 62b displayed on the OSD menu window 60. In controlling the volume level for the headset 55, the viewer experiences inconvenience and not-too-easy operations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention has been developed in order to solve the above drawbacks and other problems associated with the conventional arrangement. An aspect of the present invention is to provide an audio/video device and a volume control method facilitating volume controls of an external audio reproduction unit by using volume control buttons of a remote controller.

The foregoing and other aspects and advantages are substantially realized by providing an audio/video (A/V) device including speakers, an audio output port for externally outputting an audio signal, an audio signal processing unit for reproducing and amplifying the audio signal and applying the amplified audio signal to any of the speakers or the audio output port, a memory unit for storing volume control values corresponding to the audio output port and the speakers, and a control unit for applying to the audio signal processing unit any of the volume control values stored in the memory based on whether the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in

the audio output port. The control unit controls the audio signal processing unit to increase or decrease the volume control values for the audio output port by the volume control buttons provided on the remote controller when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port.

The A/V device may further include a display unit for reproducing a video signal. The control unit controls the display unit to display a volume control menu window for increasing or decreasing the volume control values when detecting the external audio reproduction unit plugged in the audio output port.

The volume control menu window is displayed on a portion of an image reproduction area of the display unit when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port.

The volume control menu window for the external audio reproduction unit is converted to a volume control menu window for the speakers when the external audio reproduction unit is unplugged from the audio output port.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the external audio reproduction unit is any of a headset, an ear-phone, and the speakers.

Furthermore, an aspect of the present invention is to provide a volume control method for an A/V device having speakers for reproducing an audio signal, an audio output port for externally outputting the audio signal, and a display unit for reproducing images, includes steps of detecting whether an external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port, displaying on the display unit a volume control menu window for controlling volume levels to be output from the audio output port when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port, and increasing or decreasing the volume level for the external audio reproduction unit plugged in the audio output port on the volume control menu window by using volume control buttons of a remote controller for controlling the A/V device.

In displaying the volume control menu window on the display unit, a previously stored volume value for the external audio reproduction unit is displayed on the display unit.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the previously stored volume value is the latest volume value set for the external audio reproduction unit during operations of the A/V device.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the step of displaying the volume control menu window on the display unit converts the volume control menu window on the display unit to a volume control menu window for the speakers when the external audio reproduction unit is released from the audio output port.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above aspects and features of the present invention will be more apparent by describing certain embodiments of the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a view illustrating an audio reproduction unit of a conventional audio/video device;

FIG. 2A is a block diagram illustrating another audio reproduction unit of the conventional audio/video device;

FIG. 2B is a view illustrating a volume control process for a headset for the audio/video device of FIG. 2A;

FIG. 3 is a view illustrating a volume control method for an audio/video device according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating the audio/video device of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5A and FIG. 5B are views illustrating an OSD menu window displayed on a screen depending on whether a headset is plugged in; and

FIG. 6 is a flow chart for controlling the volume level for an external audio reproduction unit by using volume control buttons of a remote controller according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIVE, NON-LIMITING EMBODIMENTS

The present invention will be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 3 illustrates a volume control method for an A/V device according to an embodiment of the present invention.

An A/V device **100** controls volume levels and sets channels by using a remote controller **400**, and the main body of the A/V device **100** is provided with an audio output port in which an external audio reproduction unit such as a headset **300** is plugged. The main body of the A/V device **100** has a power switch, channel-setting buttons, volume control buttons, a headset jack, a screen **150**, and speakers **161**. If the headset **300** is not plugged in the headset jack by using a male connector **301**, an audio signal is reproduced through the speakers **161** provided on the main body of the A/V device **100**. If a viewer plugs the headset **300** in the headset jack, an On-screen display (OSD) menu window **150a** for controlling the volume level for the headset **300** is displayed on the bottom of the screen, that is, of a display unit **150**. If the viewer presses volume control buttons **403** and **404** provided on the remote controller **400**, the cursor on the OSD menu window **150a** moves so that the magnitude of an audio signal applied to the headset **300** increases and decreases. In FIG. 3, the cursor **151a** indicates that the volume level is set to "30". If the viewer unplugs the headset **300** from the A/V device **100**, an OSD menu window (not shown) for controlling the volume level for the speakers **161** is displayed on the bottom of the display unit **150**. Thus, the viewer can control the volume level for the speakers **161** by using the volume control buttons **403** and **404** provided on the remote controller **400**. Therefore, the viewer does not have to control the volume level for the headset **300** with a complicated OSD as shown in FIG. 2B. The viewer can conveniently control the volume level of the headset **300** by using the remote controller **400** at the same time that the viewer plugs the headset **300** in the headset jack provided on the A/V device **100**.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating the A/V device **100** of FIG. 3, which will be described together with FIG. 3 as below.

The A/V device **100** has a tuner **110**, a signal separation unit **120**, a video signal processing unit **130**, an audio signal processing unit **140**, a screen **150**, speakers **161**, an audio output port **162**, a processor **170**, an OSD processing unit **180**, a ROM **190**, and a key input unit **200**.

The tuner **110** receives broadcast signals, and selects any of the broadcast signals received according to the channel-setting keys **401** and **402** provided on the remote controller **400**. The signal separation unit **120** separates a video signal and an audio signal from a broadcast signal selected by the tuner **110**. The separated video signal is applied to the video signal processing unit **130**, and the audio signal is applied to the audio signal processing unit **140**. The video signal processing unit **130** decodes and applies an input video signal to the screen **150**, and the audio signal processing unit **140** amplifies and outputs the input audio signal to the speakers **161**. The output terminal of the audio signal processing unit **140** is connected together with the speakers **161** and the audio out-

put port 162. If a headset, an earphone, or external speakers (not shown) are plugged in the audio output port 162, any audio signal is not applied to the speakers 161. That is, the audio signal processing unit 140 applies the audio signal to any of the speakers 161 and the audio output port 162.

The processor 170 controls the overall functions of the A/V device 100, and controls the video signal processing unit 130, the audio signal processing unit 140, and the tuner 110, by using a control signal. For example, when the viewer sends a control signal for channel changes to the key input unit 200 by using the remote controller 400, the key input unit 200 receives and applies the control signal to the processor 170, and the processor 170 responds to the control signal and controls to change channels broadcasted from tuner 110. If the viewer increments or decrements a contrast value or a luminance value for an image displayed on the screen 150, the processor 170 controls the video signal processing unit 130, using the control signal sent by the remote controller 400, so as to change the contrast value or the luminance value for the image output on the screen 150. Furthermore, when an external audio reproduction unit such as a headset 300 is plugged in the audio output port 162, the processor 170 loads a volume setting value for the headset 300 that is built in the ROM 190 in response to the plugging of the headset 300, and controls the audio signal processing unit 140 based on the volume-setting value to change the level of an audio signal output from the audio signal processing unit 140 to the audio output port 162. Simultaneously, the processor 170 controls the OSD processing unit 180 to display on the screen 150 an OSD menu window such as the window 150a enabling the viewer to see whether the headset 300 is plugged in. The OSD menu window such as the window 150a displayed on the screen 150 by the OSD processing unit 180 enables the viewer to control the volume to a certain level with the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on the remote controller 400.

The ROM 190 stores the latest volume values, that is, the respective volume values for the speakers 161 and the headset 300 that the viewer sets to the A/V device 100. The stored values are displayed on the OSD menu window such as the window 150a, and the displayed values can be immediately changed through the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on the remote controller 400.

FIG. 5A and FIG. 5B illustrate OSD menu windows displayed on the screen 150 depending on whether the headset 300 is plugged in.

FIG. 5A illustrates an OSD menu window 150a when the headset 300 is plugged in the A/V device 100. The OSD menu window 150a for controlling the volume level for a headset 300 is displayed on the bottom of the screen 150 at the same time that the headset 300 is plugged in. The viewer presses the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on the remote controller 400, looking at the displayed OSD menu window 150a, to control the volume level for an external audio reproduction unit such as the headset 300.

Next, FIG. 5B illustrates an OSD menu window 150b displayed on the screen 150 when the headset 300 is unplugged from the A/V device 100. The OSD menu window 150b for controlling the volume level for the speakers 161 provided in the A/V device 100 is displayed on the bottom of the screen 150. If the viewer presses the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on the remote controller 400, the volume level for the speakers 161 is controlled and the controlled volume value is stored in the ROM 190. Hence, the viewer can easily control the level of an audio signal to be reproduced through the speakers 161 or the headset 300 by pressing the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on

the remote controller 400 without having to pay attention to whether the headset 300 is plugged in.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart for explaining a volume control method for external audio reproduction units such as a headset according to an embodiment of the present invention.

If the A/V device 100 is powered on at step S300, the processor 170 determines whether an external audio reproduction unit such as a headset or an earphone is plugged in the A/V device 100 at step S310. The audio output port 162 connected to the output terminal of the audio signal processing unit 140 may determine whether the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in.

For example, when the headset 300 is plugged in the audio output port 162 by using the male connector 301, a sensor (not shown) detects whether the headset 300 is plugged in. The sensor is mounted inside the audio output port 162 to detect the plugging of a headset 300. When the headset 300 is plugged in the audio output port 162, the processor 170 can detect the plug-in of the headset 300 through changes of the impedance or currents of the audio output port 162.

If an external audio reproduction unit such as the headset 300 is plugged in the A/V device 100, the processor 170 loads a volume control value corresponding to the headset 300 out of the volume control values stored in the ROM 190, and applies the volume control value to the audio signal processing unit 140 to decrease or increase the amplification degree of the audio signal processing unit 140 at step S320.

The processor 170 controls the OSD processing unit 180 to apply an OSD menu window from the OSD processing unit 180 to the video signal processing unit 130 so that the viewer can increment or decrement the volume level for the headset 300 at step S330. If any external audio reproduction unit is not plugged in the audio output port 162, the processor 170 loads a volume control value corresponding to the speakers 161 out of the volume control values stored in the ROM 190, and applies the loaded volume control value to the audio signal processing unit 140 so as to increase or decrease the amplification degree of the audio signal processing unit 140 at step S340.

Next, the processor 170 controls the OSD processing unit 180 to apply the OSD menu window from the OSD processing unit 180 to the video signal processing unit 130 so that the viewer can increase or decrease the volume level of the speakers 161 at step S350.

If the OSD menu 150a or 150b is loaded on the screen 150 to enable a user to control the volume level for the headset 300 or the speakers 161, the processor 170 stands by for the inputs of the volume control buttons of the remote controller 400 which are used for volume controls at step S360. Pressing the volume control buttons 403 and 404 provided on the remote controller 400, the viewer can move the cursor 151a on the OSD menu window 150a or 150b back and forth to change the volume control value stored in the ROM 190. Simultaneously, the amplification degree of the audio signal processing unit 140 is changed according to the changed volume control values at step S370.

If no input occurs by the volume control buttons of the remote controller 400 when the OSD menu window 150a or 150b is displayed on the screen 150, the processor 170 stands by for a predetermined time such as 5 seconds, and checks if the inputs are applied from the volume control buttons 403 and 404 within a predetermined time such as five seconds at step S380.

If there exists an input of a control signal from the volume control buttons 403 and 404 within the predetermined time as a result of the check, the processor 170 changes the volume control values of the ROM 190 set for the speakers 161 and

the headset **300** according to the inputted control signal corresponding to the volume control buttons **403** and **404**. Otherwise, the processor **170** turns off the OSD menu window **150a** or **150b** which is for volume controls. Accordingly, the viewer does not have to check whether the headset **300** is plugged in the A/V device **100** in order to separately control volumes.

As described above, according to the present invention, with respect to plugging an external audio reproduction unit such as a headset, an earphone, and external speakers in an A/V device, the viewer does not have to separately control volume levels for the plugged external audio reproduction unit. When the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the A/V device, the present invention displays a menu window for controlling volume levels for the external audio reproduction unit so that the viewer can conveniently control the volume levels on the displayed menu window with the volume control buttons provided on the remote controller.

The foregoing embodiment and advantages are merely exemplary and are not to be construed as limiting the present invention. The present teaching can be readily applied to other types of apparatuses. Also, the description of the embodiments of the present invention is intended to be illustrative, and not to limit the scope of the claims, and many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:

1. A volume control method for an A/V device having a speaker for reproducing an audio signal, an audio output port for externally outputting the audio signal, and a display unit for reproducing images, the method comprising:

detecting whether an external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port;

displaying on the display unit a volume control menu window; and

increasing or decreasing a volume level provided in the volume control menu window by using volume control buttons of a remote controller,

wherein the displaying the volume control menu window and the increasing or decreasing the volume level are based on a result of the detecting whether an external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port; and

wherein the volume level corresponds to the signal level of the audio signal output to the audio output port.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the displaying the volume control menu window comprises:

displaying an audio output port volume control menu corresponding to the audio output port when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port; and

displaying a speaker volume control menu corresponding to the speaker when the external audio reproduction unit is unplugged.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the increasing or decreasing the volume level by using volume control buttons of a remote controller comprises:

loading volume control values corresponding to the audio output port stored in a memory unit when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port; and

loading volume control values corresponding to the speakers stored in the memory unit when the external audio reproduction unit is unplugged.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprises: displaying an audio output port volume control menu corresponding to the audio output port; and

at the same time, loading volume control values corresponding to the audio output port stored in a memory unit, when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port.

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising: displaying a volume control menu window for increasing or decreasing the volume control values after detecting the external audio reproduction unit plugged in the audio output port and when a user operates volume control buttons.

6. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising: switching a sound output from the speaker to the audio output port when the external audio reproduction unit is plugged in the audio output port.

7. An audio/visual (A/V) device which processes an audio signal for an external audio reproduction unit, the A/V device comprising:

a speaker operable to output the audio signal;

an audio output port, which is connectable to an external audio reproduction unit and operable to output the audio signal to the external audio reproduction unit;

an audio signal processing unit operable to process the audio signal and output the processed audio signal to one of the speaker and the audio output port;

a display screen operable to display one of a first On-screen Display (OSD) window, which indicates that the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port, and a second OSD window, which indicates that the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port; and

a control unit which is operable to receive an input command and which controls the audio signal processing unit and the display screen,

wherein if the control unit receives the input command and the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port, the control unit controls the display screen to automatically display the first OSD window, and

wherein if the control unit receives the input command and the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port, the control unit controls the display screen to automatically display the second OSD window.

8. The A/V device according to claim 7, wherein if the control unit receives the input command and the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port, the control unit further controls the audio signal processing unit to automatically output the processed audio signal to the audio output port, and

wherein if the control unit receives the input command and the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port, the control unit further controls the audio signal processing unit to automatically output the processed audio signal to the speaker.

9. The A/V device according to claim 7, wherein the external audio reproduction unit includes one of headphones and an external speaker.

10. The A/V device according to claim 7, wherein the input command includes volume control command.

11. The A/V device according to claim 10, wherein the first OSD window displays previously stored volume level of external audio reproduction unit and the second OSD window displays previously stored volume level of the speaker.

12. A method for controlling an audio/visual (A/V) device having an audio output port, speaker and a display screen, wherein the A/V device processes an audio signal for an external audio reproduction unit, the method comprising:

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determining whether the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port of the A/V device; receiving a input command;

if the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port of the A/V device, automatically displaying on the display screen a first OSD window indicating that the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port; and

if the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port, automatically displaying on the display screen a second OSD window indicating that the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein if the external audio reproduction unit is connected to the audio output port of the A/V device, the method further comprises automatically outputting the processed audio signal to the audio output port, and

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wherein if the external audio reproduction unit is not connected to the audio output port, the method further comprises automatically outputting the processed audio signal to the speaker.

14. The method according to claim 12, wherein the external audio reproduction unit includes one of headphones and an external speaker.

15. The method according to claim 12, wherein the input command includes volume control command.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the first OSD window displays previously stored volume level of external audio reproduction unit and the second OSD window displays previously stored volume level of the speaker.

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