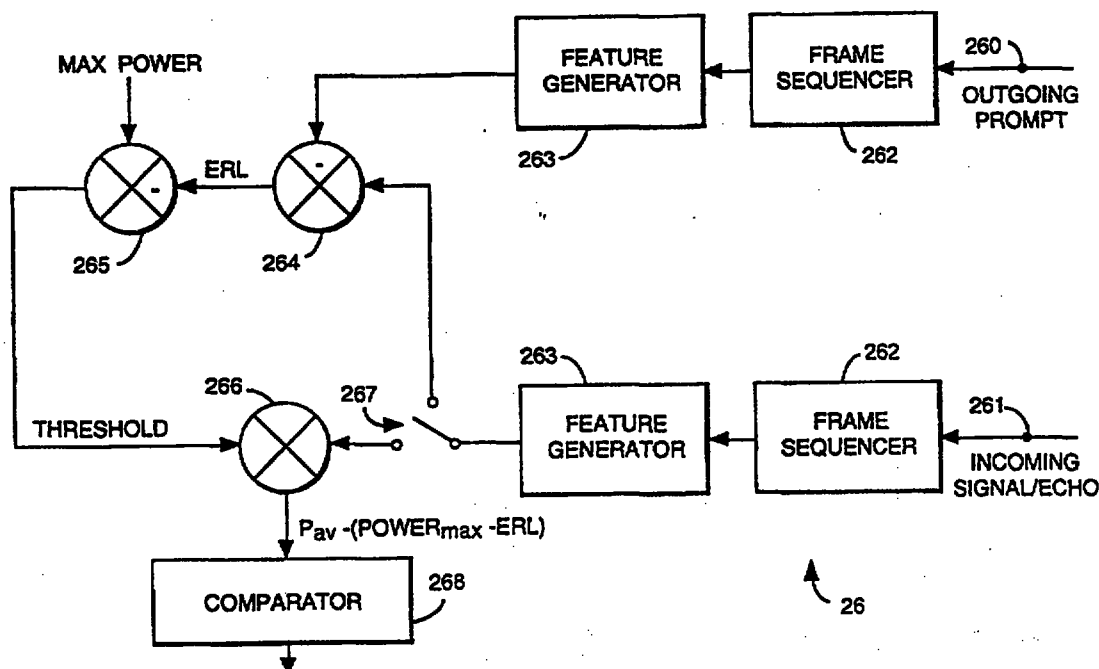




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(54) Title: VOICE ACTIVITY DETECTION



(57) Abstract

A voice activity detector (26) comprising an input for receiving an outgoing speech signal transmitted from a speech system (2) to a user and an input for receiving an incoming signal from the user. Both the outgoing and incoming signals are divided into time limited frames. Means (263) are provided for calculating a feature from each frame of the incoming signal and for forming a function of the calculated feature and a threshold. Based on the function, it is determined whether or not the incoming signal includes speech. Means are provided to determine the echo return loss during an outgoing speech signal from the interactive speech system and to control the threshold in dependence on the echo return loss measured.