

TITLE: PEDAL MISAPPLICATION SUPPRESSION ACCELERATOR
AND OPERATING METHOD THEREOF

(a) Technical Field of the Invention

5 The present invention is generally related to vehicle driving safety, and more particular to a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator and a related method against a driver's accidental pressing the accelerator pedal.

(b) Description of the Prior Art

Unintended vehicle acceleration usually occurs when a vehicle is an idle
10 and ready-to-run state. It is a condition unexpected by the vehicle driver and often leading to traffic incidents.

Most unintended vehicle acceleration is caused by improper operation from the driver. An ordinary vehicle has its acceleration pedal and brake pedal next to each other. A driver therefore may accidentally step on the acceleration
15 pedal while he/she actually intends to brake, especially when the driver is careless or nervous.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A major objective of the present invention is to provide a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator for preventing unintended vehicle acceleration. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator includes a main member, which in turn includes a first connection socket, a second connection socket, a buzzer, and a micro-controller configured with a triggering condition and a releasing condition. The first connection socket is electrically connected to a power source of a vehicle where the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator is installed. The second connection socket is electrically connected to an acceleration pedal detector of the vehicle and, when the acceleration pedal is engaged and disengaged, a number of progress signals is delivered to the micro-controller. The triggering condition includes a number of intervals and, for each interval, a corresponding duration and a corresponding threshold. Each interval is a percentage range specifying how much the vehicle's acceleration pedal has changed its position in terms of percentages of a pedal stroke. Each duration specifies the fastest time duration allowable for the acceleration pedal to attain a corresponding interval of acceleration pedal position change. The micro-controller converts progress signals of the acceleration pedal to corresponding percentages of the pedal stroke, obtains at least a difference DEF between the successive percentages, records at least a

time duration RES between successive progress signals, and calculates
DEF/RES=X. When X is greater than or equal to a threshold corresponding to
an interval to which the DEF belongs to, the micro-controller sends an idle
signal to the vehicle's engine control unit or intercepts the progress signals to
5 prevent them from reaching the engine control unit, so that the vehicle restores
to an idle state. The releasing condition is when the progress signals of the
acceleration pedal are reduced to at least 10% of the pedal stroke, where the
micro-controller stops the idle signal.

Preferably, the main member further includes a third connection socket
10 electrically connected to a configuration device, which includes a display and
a number of control buttons for setting the acceleration pedal interval
parameters and the response time parameters.

Preferably, each duration has a range between 1 and 2000 ms, and the
intervals are defined as 0~30%, 30~60%, and 60~100%.

15 Preferably, the main member further includes a recorder, which records
various data from the vehicle such as the operation statuses of the vehicle's
acceleration pedal, and brake system.

Preferably, the main member further includes an electrical switch, which
includes a number of pins and at least a jumper to close, open or bypass some
20 of the pins so as to configure an operation mode of the engine control unit.

Preferably, the micro-controller further includes a wireless transmission element connecting to a big data server for data storage and update.

Preferably, the main member further includes a switch for turning on or off the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator.

5 Preferably, the main member further includes a blind-spot detection system.

Preferably, the main member has an aluminum casing or a plastic casing internally attached with a copper plate.

Another major objective of the present invention is to provide a method
10 applied to a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator for preventing unintended acceleration of a vehicle, where the vehicle comprises a power source, an acceleration pedal, an acceleration pedal detector, and an engine control unit. The pedal misapplication suppression method includes: receiving
15 a number of progress signals of the acceleration pedal by a micro-controller of the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator from the acceleration pedal detector; converting the progress signals to corresponding percentages of a pedal stroke of the vehicle and obtaining at least a difference DEF between successive percentages by the micro-controller; recording at least a time
20 duration RES between successive progress signals and calculating $DEF/RES=X$; when X is greater than or equal to a threshold corresponding to

an interval to which the DEF belongs to, activating a buzzer to issue an audible alarm, sending an idle signal to the engine control unit or intercepting the progress signals to prevent them from reaching the engine control unit, so that the vehicle restores to an idle state; and, when the progress signals of the acceleration pedal are reduced to at least 10% of the pedal stroke, stopping the idle signal by the micro-controller.

The foregoing objectives and summary provide only a brief introduction to the present invention. To fully appreciate these and other objects of the present invention as well as the invention itself, all of which will become apparent to those skilled in the art, the following detailed description of the invention and the claims should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. Throughout the specification and drawings identical reference numerals refer to identical or similar parts.

Many other advantages and features of the present invention will become manifest to those versed in the art upon making reference to the detailed description and the accompanying sheets of drawings in which a preferred structural embodiment incorporating the principles of the present invention is shown by way of illustrative example.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Please provide further detailed explanation of the invention by combining the attached images with specific implementation methods below.

5 FIG. 1 is a perspective diagram showing a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a functional block diagram showing the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator of FIG. 1.

10 FIG. 3 is a perspective diagram showing the connection of the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator of FIG. 1 to a configuration device.

FIG. 4 is a perspective diagram showing a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according another embodiment of the present invention.

15 Symbol descriptions:

10. main member

11. first connection socket

12. second connection socket

13. micro-controller

20 14. buzzer

- 15. third connection socket
- 16. electrical switch
- 161. jumper
- 17. recorder
- 5 20 configuration device
- 21. display
- 22. control buttons
- 30. big data server

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

THE BEST EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

The following descriptions are exemplary embodiments only, and are not intended to limit the scope, applicability or configuration of the invention in
5 any way. Rather, the following description provides a convenient illustration for implementing exemplary embodiments of the invention. Various changes to the described embodiments may be made in the function and arrangement of the elements described without departing from the scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

10 As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, a pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to an embodiment of the present invention includes the following components.

The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator is mainly embodied in a main member 10, which includes a first connection socket 11, a second
15 connection socket 12, a micro-controller or micro control unit (MCU) 13, a buzzer 14, a third connection socket 15, an electrical switch 16, and a recorder 17. The first connection socket 11 is electrically connected to a power source of a vehicle where the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator is installed. The power source of the vehicle includes at least a fuse. The main member 10

may have an aluminum casing, or a plastic casing internally attached with a copper plate, both capable of for shielding electromagnetic waves.

The second connection socket 12 is electrically connected to an acceleration pedal detector of the vehicle and, when the acceleration pedal is engaged and disengaged, a number of progress signals is delivered to the micro-controller 13, in addition to the vehicle's engine control unit (ECU).

The micro-controller 13 is configured with a triggering condition and a releasing condition. The triggering condition is defined by a number of intervals and, for each interval, a corresponding duration. The intervals are a number of ranges reflecting how much acceleration pedal has changed its position in terms of percentages of the pedal's complete stroke from fully release to flooring. In the present embodiment, the intervals defined are 0~30%, 30~60%, and 60~100%, but the present invention is not limited as such.

The 0~30%, 30~60%, and 60~100% intervals mean the pedal position has changed between successive progress signals for an amount that is within 0~30%, 30~60%, and 60~100% of the pedal's complete stroke, reflecting when the acceleration pedal is pressed for a short distance, for a longer distance, or until the acceleration pedal is floored.

Each duration specifies the fastest time duration allowable for a driver to

press the acceleration pedal to attain the corresponding interval of pedal position change. In the present embodiment, each duration has a range between 1 and 2000 ms but the present invention is not limited as such.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, the third connection socket 15 is electrically
5 connected to a configuration device 20, which includes a display 21 and a number of control buttons 22 for setting the acceleration pedal interval parameters and the response time parameters.

The electrical switch 16 includes a number of pins and at least a jumper
161 to close, open or bypass some of the pins so as to configure an operation
10 mode of the engine control unit.

The recorder 17 records various data from the vehicle such as the operation statuses of the vehicle's acceleration pedal, and brake system. The recording made by the recorder 17 allows examination after an accident occurs so as to and investigate the causes of the accident.

15 During when the acceleration pedal is pressed, a number of progress signals are produced according to how much the acceleration pedal is pressed, and the progress signals are transmitted to the vehicle's engine control unit (ECU). The engine control unit, accordingly, adjusts the throttle and fuel injector so that gas and air are mixed appropriately and optimal power is
20 delivered by the engine. Therefore, despite that acceleration pedal is

accidentally pressed, the engine control unit would still faithfully respond and the engine deliver as usual the corresponding power, causing traffic accident.

The triggering condition of the present invention is therefore equal to each interval divided by its corresponding duration as a threshold. If the
5 progress signals of the acceleration pedal reflect that the pedal's position change falls within a specific interval within an even shorter duration (thereby, exceeding the corresponding threshold), the micro-controller 13 sends an idle signal to the engine control unit (ECU) or the micro-controller 13 intercepts the progress signals so that they do not reach the engine control unit. The
10 vehicle's engine then restores to the idle state. The buzzer 14 is also activated to sound an audible alarm. The unintended acceleration is as such avoided.

The present invention also teaches a related method as follows. Firstly, the micro-controller 13 continuously receives a number of progress signals of the acceleration pedal. The micro-controller 13 converts the progress signals to
15 corresponding percentages of the pedal stroke, and obtains at least a difference DEF between the successive percentages. The micro-controller 13 also records at least a time duration RES between the successive progress signals. The micro-controller 13 then calculates $DEF/RES=X$. When X is greater than or equal to a threshold corresponding to an interval to which the DEF belongs
20 to, the micro-controller 13 sends an idle signal to the engine control unit or the

micro-controller intercepts the progress signals to prevent them from reaching the engine control unit, so that the engine of the vehicle restores to the idle state. In the meantime, the buzzer 14 is activated to issue an audible alarm.

When the progress signals of the acceleration pedal are reduced to at least
5 10% of the pedal stroke, the micro-controller 13 stops the idle signal (i.e., the releasing condition).

In other words, the micro-controller 13 continuously monitors the acceleration pedal positions and the times when these positions are reached. The micro-controller 13 then obtains (1) DEF from two successive progress
10 signals, and (2) RES from two successive progress signals. Then, when DEF/RES is greater than or equal to the triggering condition (i.e., the threshold determined by which interval DEF belongs to), the micro-controller 13 sends an idle signal or the micro-controller 13 intercepts the progress signals so that they do not reach the engine control unit (ECU). In either case, the throttle of
15 the vehicle's engine is closed. The vehicle restores to the idle state. The accidental pressing of the acceleration pedal then will not lead to unintended acceleration.

When the progress signals of the acceleration pedal are reduced to at least 10% of the pedal stroke, the micro-controller 13 stops the idle signal so that
20 the acceleration pedal is restored to function normally.

The micro-controller 13 may further include a wireless transmission element 18 connecting to a big data server 30 for data storage and update.

When the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator fails to function correctly, a user may conduct the following resolution.

5 1. The user may first check whether all connections are proper and secured. If all connections are normal, the user may check whether the fuse is still operational or replace it with a new one. Usually the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator may be restored in this way after restarting the vehicle.

2. As shown in FIG. 4, the main member 10 further include a switch 19.

10 If the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator still cannot be restored after the above procedure, the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator may be turned off (and on) using the switch 19.

3. The user may turn off the vehicle and then turn the ignition (not starting the engine but only turning on the electricity), press the acceleration pedal
15 slowly until it is floored, and hold the pedal for about 2 to 3 minutes. The vehicle will sound one long beep and one short beep, indicating that the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator is turned off.

4. The user then again then turn the ignition (not starting the engine but only turning on the electricity) to restart the pedal misapplication suppression
20 accelerator. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator will then be

back online with default parameters.

To further enhance driving safety, the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator may further include a blind-spot detection system activated after the vehicle is started. The blind-spot detection system employs a 24GHz
5 mm-wave radar to provide detection and alert (1) when there is an object adjacent a lateral side of the vehicle, (2) when the vehicle changes lanes, (3) when there is an object adjacent to the rear of the vehicle, and (4) when a vehicle door is opened.

While certain novel features of this invention have been shown and
10 described and are pointed out in the annexed claim, it is not intended to be limited to the details above, since it will be understood that various omissions, modifications, substitutions and changes in the forms and details of the device illustrated and in its operation can be made by those skilled in the art without departing in any way from the claims of the present invention.

I CLAIM:

1. A pedal misapplication suppression accelerator for preventing
unintended acceleration of a vehicle, where the vehicle comprises a
power source, an acceleration pedal, an acceleration pedal detector,
5 and an engine control unit, the pedal misapplication suppression
accelerator comprising a main member (10), wherein:
the main member (10) comprises a first connection socket, a second
connection socket (12), a micro-controller (13), and a buzzer
(14);
10 the first connection socket (11) is electrically connected to the power
source;
the second connection socket (12) is electrically connected to the
acceleration pedal detector;
the micro-controller (13) receives a plurality of progress signals from
15 the acceleration pedal detector via the second connection socket
(12);
the micro-controller (13) is configured with a triggering condition
and a releasing condition;
the triggering condition comprises a plurality of intervals and, for
20 each interval, a corresponding duration and a corresponding

threshold equal to the corresponding interval divided by the corresponding duration;

each interval is a percentage range specifying how much the acceleration pedal has changed its position in terms of percentages of a pedal stroke converted from successive progress signals;

each duration specifies the fastest time duration allowable for the acceleration pedal to attain a corresponding interval of acceleration pedal position change;

the micro-controller (13) converts the progress signals to corresponding percentages of the pedal stroke, obtains at least a difference DEF between the successive percentages, records at least a time duration RES between successive progress signals, calculates $DEF/RES=X$;

when X is greater than or equal to a threshold corresponding to an interval to which the DEF belongs to, the micro-controller (13) activates the buzzer (14) to issue an audible alarm, sends an idle signal to the engine control unit or intercepts the progress signals to prevent them from reaching the engine control unit, so that the vehicle restores to an idle state; and

the releasing condition is when the progress signals of the acceleration pedal are reduced to at least 10% of the pedal stroke, where the micro-controller (13) stops the idle signal.

2. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 5 1, wherein the main member (10) further comprises a third connection socket (15) for electrically connecting to a configuration device (20); and the configuration device (20) comprises a display (21) and a plurality of control buttons (22) for setting the intervals and durations.
- 10 3. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1 or 2, wherein each duration is between 1 and 2000 ms; and the intervals are 0~30%, 30~60%, and 60~100%.
4. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, wherein the main member (10) further comprises a recorder (17) 15 that records operation statuses of the vehicle's acceleration pedal and brake system.
5. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, wherein the main member (10) further comprises an electrical switch (16) having a plurality of pins and at least a jumper (161) to 20 close, open or bypass some of the pins so as to configure an

operation mode of the engine control unit.

6. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, wherein micro-controller (13) further comprises a wireless transmission element (18) connecting to a big data server (30).
- 5 7. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, wherein the main member (10) further comprises a switch (19) for turning on and off the pedal misapplication suppression accelerator.
8. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, further comprising a blind-spot detection system.
- 10 9. The pedal misapplication suppression accelerator according to claim 1, wherein the main member (10) has an aluminum casing, or a plastic casing internally attached with at least a copper plate.
10. A pedal misapplication suppression method for preventing unintended acceleration of a vehicle, where the vehicle comprises a power source, an acceleration pedal, an acceleration pedal detector, and an engine control unit, the pedal misapplication suppression method comprising:
15 receiving a plurality of progress signals of the acceleration pedal by a micro-controller (13) from the acceleration pedal detector;
20 converting the progress signals to corresponding percentages of a

pedal stroke of the vehicle and obtaining at least a difference DEF between successive percentages by the micro-controller (13);

recording at least a time duration RES between successive progress
5 signals and calculating $DEF/RES=X$;

when X is greater than or equal to a threshold corresponding to an interval to which the DEF belongs to, activating a buzzer (14) to issue an audible alarm, sending an idle signal to the engine control unit or intercepting the progress signals to prevent them
10 from reaching the engine control unit, so that the vehicle restores to an idle state; and

when the progress signals of the acceleration pedal are reduced to at least 10% of the pedal stroke, stopping the idle signal by the micro-controller (13).

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