

## Speedrunning Terminology for Translation and Interpreting

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### Abstract

Recent work with the speedrunning community has necessitated the creation of a bilingual database of relevant English and Japanese terminology. Working on this database has presented a number of translation, interpreting, and cultural challenges, particularly since the definitions/explanations of various terms across currently existing glossaries are generally cloud-sourced by community members who are not linguists or translators, and thus entries are often vague, inappropriate, self-referential, uncited, tend to mix grammatical structures, and do not have enough associated information (such as images or clearly labeled parts of speech) to easily generate useful partner terms. As this database continues to develop, we hope to provide structured support for community members, potential translators with little knowledge of the field, and anyone else interested in the hobby with a clear, easy-to-use resource for all the diverse terms that are being generated as the hobby continues to evolve and expand thanks to the growing popularity of both the independent live-streaming of video games and the many charity events hosted on platforms such as Twitch and YouTube. This paper assumes no prior knowledge of the field and will hopefully serve as a solid introduction to speedrunning concepts and terminology from a translation-based perspective. The database is constantly being updated not only as new terms emerge, but also as the usage of existing terms changes over time.

### Background

In recent years, speedrunning has been a popular subject of research, and the topic has been widely discussed from many different perspectives. Experts such as Barnabé and Bernard have explored the spectacular aspect of it from a humanities/philosophical perspective, Lafond has delved deep into the math, and papers such as “Starcraft from the Stands” have done amazing work describing the different personalities of spectators and how they interact with their hobby in the modern world of streaming. Collaborative work like that of Smith, Obrist, and Wright has expanded on the nature of live-streaming in gaming culture, and that of Witkowski & Manning has explored the professional, career, and networking angles. This paper, on the other hand, will look at speedrunning from the practical perspective of a translator or interpreter interested in working with the community to provide international support for speedrunners.

“Speedrunning” 「RTA」 is essentially the hobby of playing video games fast. This can be as illustrious as competing for a world record time on one of the official leaderboards such as Speedrun.com, or as mundane as trying to beat your favorite game just a little faster than you did the last time you played. There are competitions online by communities such as Speedrunslive.com (SRL), as well as massive charity events such as Games Done Quick (GDQ), an event that features a variety of “runners” 「走者」 (*sōsha*) who perform exhibitions of their game of choice.

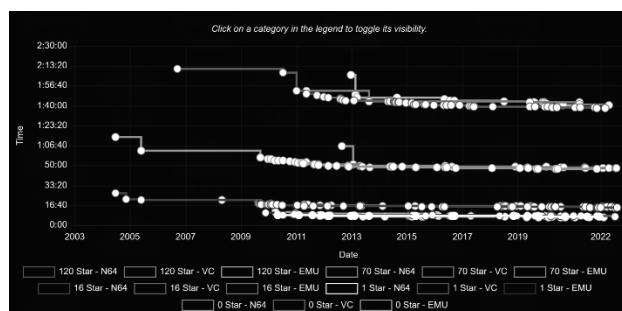


Figure 1. World Record History, Super Mario 64 (Full Game)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> as tracked by records generated on speedrun.com



But speedrunning does not have to be competitive to be fun. In programming such as The First Step, a weekly Twitch show on the GDQ channel about getting into speedrunning, the hosts JHobz and Keizaron regularly remind viewers: “If you’re trying to go fast, you’re a speedrunner.” (JHobz and Keizaron 2022) The show features races between the two hosts in games that they have little to no experience or practice playing, which serves to remind the audience that they do not need to be vying for the world record 「世界記録」 (*sekai kiroku*) to enjoy making personal progress, often described as tracking “PBs” (personal bests) 「自己べ」 (*jikobe*)—much in the same way many people enjoy hobbies like running or weightlifting.

Speedrunning is not only becoming more popular as a hobby, but also as a spectator sport. The number of games being streamed on Twitch continues to increase, while viewership for individual channels fluctuates as content creation becomes more competitive. This has resulted in increased multilingual support, and large events such as GDQ are now restreamed in multiple languages, such as Japanese, Portuguese, French, and more. This means that local speedrunning communities obtain permission and access to the raw feed for the event, design their own stream layouts, and invite runners of the games to volunteer as commentators 「解説者」 (*kaisetsu-sha*) for non-English audiences.

Runners will typically provide their own commentary while they perform their exhibitions, but will usually also have a “couch” (a group of friends) to provide additional co-commentary, advice, or chatter during the run.<sup>2</sup> If there is an experienced runner available to provide commentary in a restream’s target language, this is generally preferred. Unfortunately for restreaming organizations trying to find local commentators, runners will often introduce games that are either extremely niche or have not been published internationally. In addition, during breaks and setup periods between runs, events will often have interviews or donation incentive introductions that the restream hosts do not understand. In these cases, having an interpreter available is extremely useful—but rare due to the required skill set and the fact that these jobs are generally unpaid, volunteer activities.

To increase the potential pool of able volunteers, assist existing bilingual interpreters, and for the first time attempt to collate the unique terminology arising around this subject, we created the Speedrunning Termbase 「RTA用語ベース」 (*RTA yōgo bēsu*), a community resource to be freely available through the Japanese Restream Discord channel.<sup>3</sup> The curation of this termbase is ongoing, terms are constantly subject to change, and the project has been rife with both expected and unexpected linguistic challenges.

The database has fields for Concept Image, Subject, Part of Speech, EN Definition, EN Term, JA Definition, JA Term, JA Reading, EN Usage Examples, JA Usage Examples, EN Synonyms, JA Synonyms, Notes, and a citation column for sourcing—originally inspired by the standardization framework established in ISO 10241. It is currently sorted alphabetically by EN Term, as the streams being covered are usually in English. In the future, a Japanese tab for faster cross-referencing/easier skimming will be added, but we are still seeking to fill out the concept images and example columns more thoroughly before one is generated. This style of organization not only provides several reference points to ensure both the English and Japanese terms are pointing to the same concept (one can reference the images, examples, or definitions) but also allows it to be easily downloaded and processed by terminology management software. While Google Sheets is hardly an ideal permanent publication medium, it is currently the easiest way to ensure community members have ready access to the database to ensure update suggestions, sample sentences, and points of confusion can be addressed as transparently as possible. We are currently exploring potential future options for publishing it on an open-access platform once the images and examples get filled out.

Figure 2. The Speedrunning Termbase (Oct. 28, 2022)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This is generally disambiguated while EN-JA simultaneous interpreting as using *sōsha* when referring to the runner’s comments, and *kaisetsu-sha* when referring to the couch.

<sup>3</sup> Discord links available via [https://www.twitch.tv/japanese\\_restream](https://www.twitch.tv/japanese_restream)

<sup>4</sup> Visit the termbase for a better look!

## Inclusions and Exclusions

For an effective termbase, we needed a set of basic concepts that could be used as a foundation to expand upon as necessary by the community. As it is difficult to generate concepts without linguistic baggage, the initial database was constructed by mining terms from various existing gaming-focused glossaries both in print and on the internet. These sources are cited in the termbase, but the corpus consulted included general glossaries for casual reference such as WikiWiki<sup>5</sup> and NicoDoga<sup>6</sup>; spoken content from events such as RTAinJapan<sup>7</sup>, Games Done Quick<sup>8</sup>, and the various Speedgaming<sup>9</sup> channels; as well as print mediums like *Speedrunning Science* (Koziel 2019, 346–352). The result yielded over four-hundred terms, which might be useful for translators with access to powerful terminology software but is more difficult to absorb from a casual perusal in spreadsheet form.

Considering the most likely use cases for the termbase, we imagined a bilingual user with an interest in speedrunning but without a large amount of exposure to terms being employed in their second language. Such a user should be able to skim the termbase before an event or project, fill in terminological gaps, and process linguistic overlaps.

With this core user in mind, it was time to make cuts. The first concepts to be dropped were those that already use the same term for the same concept in both languages. As international cooperation and event participation increases, an ever-growing number of terms are being shared between communities, and the Japanese language already has a long history of adopting English terms as loanwords, particularly regarding technology (Peperkamp, Vendelin, and Kimihiro 2008, 129). Terms such as “AI”, “debugger”, or “leaderboard” for example use the same terms (pronunciation notwithstanding) for the same concepts in both languages, and the additional information the termbase offers does not add value to their adoption currently.

There are, however, many concepts that use the same term in both languages, but do in fact benefit from the additional context, examples, or general information offered by the database. The terms “bug” and “glitch” 「バグ、グリッチ」 (*bagu, guritchi*) are used interchangeably in Japanese, but in English, the term “bug” is specifically used inside the community to indicate temporary flaws in game code, while “glitch” is used to indicate persistent flaws that can be replicated and exploited (Capriola 2021). The term “bug” is more likely to be used, for example, when going through a door has a random chance to teleport you under the map and softlock 「詰む」 (*tsumu*) you, whereas “glitch” is more likely to be used as a naming convention for various techniques, such as the following excerpt from the Hollow Knight Glitch document by Rocmox and Angrevol:

### *Water Invincibility*

*Invincibility is a state where you can not take damage. Triggers that respawn you such as spikes however do still affect you.*

*To perform this **glitch** simply ground pound into water that you can swim in.*

These terms are, however, marked as synonyms in both English and Japanese alongside “exploit” 「悪用」 (*akuyō*), as their casual usage often ignores the associated subconscious collocations and nuances.

Perhaps the most significant difficulty currently lies in deciding how many internet slang terms should be included in the database, particularly when they have little to nothing to do with speedrunning per se. As speedrunning content is currently disseminated predominantly online through platforms such as Twitch and YouTube, the content creators involved are prone to using modern slang and referencing popular memes. As such, interpreting interviews, events, or any casual content will often involve an interpreter needing to have a comprehensive grasp of whatever would be common knowledge to the intended target audience, who in this case happen to be people who consume online content en masse.

Terms that have arisen that fall into this difficult category include “chad” or “vibe check”. A “chad” has been defined by Dictionary.com as “... a usually disparaging internet slang term used for a popular, confident, sexually active young white male.” (Dictionary.com n.d.; Eigoslang n.d.)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MkkhQMyzIUeGnzIv564knpCU7zccDYKVFHmvMpQYII>

<sup>5</sup> <https://wikiwiki.jp>

<sup>6</sup> <https://dic.nicovideo.jp>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.twitch.tv/rtainjapan>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.twitch.tv/gamesdonequick>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.twitch.tv/speedgaming>



Figure 3. Ernest Khalimov series, a.k.a. “GigaChad”<sup>10</sup>

It is also employed heavily in the speedrunning community to refer to overly masculinized characters, when creating ridiculous models during character generation in games that provide users with a large amount of freedom to do so (such as *Dark Souls*), and even ironically as a compliment when one does not want to be seen as complimenting someone they do, in fact, respect. Between the original and final drafts of this paper, positive usage of the term in some communities has skyrocketed. In reference to the 2022 national champion of the *Flesh and Blood* trading card game, user “beisei” casually referred to his methodology in Discord as:

*The Hamilton Model: 1) Be built different 2) analyze all cards for value 3) build a deck no one has ever seen 4) run it like a **chad** 5) win*

With a term such as “chad” in such prevalent usage in the speedrunning community (and specifically considering the unlikelihood of a Japanese interpreter understanding the reference), there is a strong case for including it in a termbase designed specifically for priming potential interpreters. Terms such as this present some obvious problems, the most obvious of which being that while these terms might often occur tangential to speedrunning, they are not in and of themselves speedrunning terms. If we start including internet slang, the database could quickly balloon in size, which would contradict its purpose of being an easy reference. Despite these fears, the number of terms that feel unintuitive enough to be considered has been rare enough that they might warrant eventual inclusion under their own subject tag, and for the time being have been relegated to a

separate sheet within the database as we continue to brainstorm possibly appropriate JA partner terms.

## Speedrunning Categories

One of the first important things to understand about modern speedrunning is the concept of “categories”. Before categories, beating a game as fast as possible was the only condition for a speedrun, and this led to several sticky points of contention. There are many glitches and techniques that can allow players to beat games much faster than any developer could have ever intended. For example, in *The Legend of Zelda 64*, players can use a technique known as “arbitrary code execution”, or “ACE” 「任意コード実行」 (*nin'i kōdo jikkō*) to write machine code into memory using game inputs, then force the game to execute that code. This means that a game that took some players sixty or more hours to complete in a casual playthrough could be “finished” in mere minutes (the current world record for the Any% category in *Zelda 64* is 3m 54s 566ms by Murph\_E)<sup>11</sup>. Many players considered this, among many other techniques, to be cheating. This raises the difficult question, however, of what techniques should be allowed and which should be banned. A great number of speedrunning techniques, such as the fireball skip in *Hollow Knight* (which allows players to turn backwards and shoot fireballs in mid-air to gain extra forward momentum, bypassing a few small areas), are not glitches per se, but some argue as a clever use of game mechanics.

Over time, in order to accommodate a wide variety of playstyles, bring more people into the speedrunning community, and frankly just to avoid a lot of unproductive arguing, the concept of categories emerged. The category of a speedrun is defined by a special ruleset, and the members of the community who are actively competing for that category determine the ruleset before the leaderboard is set up. In the above-mentioned *Zelda 64*, for example, there are currently eight main categories represented on the leaderboards at speedrun.com: Any%, 100%, All Dungeons, GSR (Ganondorf Source Requirement), MST (Medallions/Stones/Trials), Glitchless, Defeat Ganon, and No Wrong Warp. As an example, the No Wrong Warp ruleset reads as follows:

<sup>10</sup> Instagram – berlin.1969

<sup>11</sup> Murph\_E. October 23, 2022.

*No Wrong Warp Rules/Restrictions:*

*Wrong Warping is banned. This includes triggering a blue warp then dying or leaving the area in order to skip a cutscene or warp to another location. Whether the blue warp wrong warps to another location or not doesn't matter. Manipulating blue warps is banned entirely.*

*Arbitrary Code Execution is banned.*

*In the context of OoT rules, ACE is defined as:*

*Executing code outside of the .text section of a file*

*Executing modified code in the .text section of a file*

*\*If code is indirectly modified by some SRM application but it does not benefit the speedrun, it is allowed.*

While not always the case, Any% is generally the most common category for a given game. Separate categories are usually developed as either Any% becomes problematic, too short, or over time as players lose interest. The ruleset for Any% is usually that there are no rules, though some older games that had communities in Japan and in other countries (such as Dragon Quest) have different start requirements, as Japanese players preferred to start time at system power on, while other communities generally preferred to start time upon the first player input (such as pressing start on the main menu). With the evolution of the international community, its ability to communicate, and the leaderboards at speedrun.com becoming the primary validating body for world record times, these rulesets have largely been consolidated by their respective communities at this point. One interesting facet of the Any% moniker is the tendency for games to evolve multiple variations of Any%, banning individual techniques in parenthesis to create the new categories. Final Fantasy 3 for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), for example, has Any%, Any% (No Credits Warp), Any% (No Glitched Jobs), and Any% (Glitchless). In refining the concept of Any%, the spirit of beating the game as fast as possible still feels satisfying, while each group of players within the community can still play the game the way they personally feel is “fair”.

Perhaps the second-most popular category is the “100%” category, which is common for games that include any sort of collectable item or trackable map. Super Metroid for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) has a well-established community of 100% runners,

as the game displays game completion after the credits as well as on the file-select screen. This makes it particularly easy for verifying bodies to confirm that runners have met the ruleset criteria.

This category is also extremely popular for shorter indie games in which the Any% category is extremely short, and completing 100% does not require several hours to run. Celeste (2018, PC) is one such example, in which the Any% run clocks in at a little over twenty-six minutes, while the 100% category is currently around an hour and a half. The Celeste 100% leaderboards also include a unique additional submission requirement, as there is a glitch known as Dash Trigger Skip (DTS) which allows players to skip a cutscene at the beginning of the final sequence that limits the player’s movement abilities. After discussion among the community, instead of deciding on a simple ban or allowance, they decided to simply clearly indicate on each submission whether DTS was used, allowing them to keep all 100% runs on the leaderboard while simultaneously providing transparency. As of October 23, 2022, the top two leaderboard times do not contain the skip.

Every game has its own set of categories, but thankfully as the community has become globalized, very few issues arise in the translation of these categories. Runners of each community use the names printed on the leaderboards, which are usually in English, and with the exception of extremely niche or confusing titles (such as ACE), the Japanese community uses the standardized terms (such as Glitchless 「グリッチレス」 (*guritchiresu*)). The only problematic category for the sake of the termbase so far has been that of “1CC”, which can stand for “one-credit clear” or “one-continue clear”. While “one-credit clear” has an existing equivalent for arcade games in particular, 「1コインプレー」 (*ichi koinpurē*), the concept of “one-coin” is too specific to encompass all games that use credits, such as console ports of arcade games. In addition, we are still searching for a citable term for “one-continue clear”, as it is not a common category, and we have yet to find footage with Japanese commentary of the few games that use it (The Legend of Zelda 2 [NES], for one).

## **Speedrun-adjacent Gaming Modes**

There are many unintended ways of playing video games that are not necessarily for speed, but still provide unique challenges or entertainment for their respective communities. These game modes are often featured at speedrunning events, marathons, and in community

challenge activities that can require language support. For the Japanese community in particular, these game modes are relatively rare, and some community members (who specifically requested anonymity) have suggested this might be due to their being seen as a “betrayal” of the source material, particularly when the game mode requires modifying the original software.

Randomizers 「ランダムイザ」(*randamaiza*) are a simple example of this. These programs shuffle the data inside a game so that no two play sessions are alike (White). A randomizer will often move items or rewards, requiring players to plan new routes 「チャート」(*chāto*) to complete the game.<sup>12</sup> As many of these locations can be quite unintuitive, runners usually suggest that players have a comprehensive knowledge of the base game before attempting the randomizer. Organizations such as SpeedRunsLive often run tournaments in which experienced runners race random seeds (shared codes that induce identical iterations) in a randomizer as a competitive sport. These races are often streamed live and are uniquely entertaining thanks to the added requirement of making bold routing decisions over simple execution. A player who guesses wrong and wanders into the wilderness can lose a tremendous amount of time, only for his opponent to miss a critical item later in the seed and get hopelessly lost.

“Hitless” runs are another type of unique challenge in which runners try to finish a game without taking any hits. These runs do not require any special software to perform, making them more immediately accessible (and less taboo) to Japanese runners. What constitutes a “hit” is determined by the community and depending on the game can vary from “any damage”, “any unintentional damage”, or “damage from enemies”, depending on what makes the most sense for a particular game. The community is currently organized around the moniker of “Team Hitless” ([teamhitless.com](http://teamhitless.com)). An example of a hitless ruleset can be seen from the following explanation for the Dark Souls hitless run:

#### General Rules

*A Hit is defined by a loss of health and/or stagger caused by an enemy.*

*Hits from player triggered traps count, environmental damage does not (Static features as lava, water, swamp, spikes, campfires are fine).*

*While fall damage does not count, a death from falling will.*

*Blocking an enemy counts as a hit, but a perfect parry/deflect does not.*

*The use of magic and/or bows is fine. Major glitches ARE NOT ALLOWED (Shadows AI Glitch, Sage Skip, etc.).*

*Minor glitches ARE ALLOWED (Air roll fall damage cancel, animation cancel, etc.).*

*Quitouts are generally not allowed, except when in Firelink Shrine or after resting at bonfires.*

*Summoning other players is forbidden, but NPC summons are allowed.*

*Killing bosses/ads from outside of the boss arena is forbidden.*

As described here, hitless runs are generally also glitchless, as finishing the game without taking hits without interacting with anything is not terribly interesting. There are sub-categories within hitless, such as Any% and All Achievements, generally allowing for longer or shorter challenges. Hitless runners often use the same “split” 「区間」(*kukan*) system that speedrunners use to track their progress but track the number of hits taken at each checkpoint instead of the time taken. In this way, new runners can enjoy the challenge of working towards a completely hitless run while tracking their personal best 「自己ベスト」(*jiko besuto*), whether a hundred hits or two, then trying to improve on that record in their next attempt.

In a combination of some of the best benefits of the two above examples, “bingo” runs require no software modifications to randomize games. They do this by using bingo card generators alongside a list of community-weighted objectives to create unique playthroughs by distributing random goals. The goal of a generic bingo race is the same as any game of bingo—to mark five spaces in a row either down, across, or diagonally. Unlike in a randomizer, a bingo race presents perfect information to an experienced runner. The challenge is in determining which row an individual runner feels they can complete the fastest,

<sup>12</sup> Note that 「ルート」(*rūto*) refers **not** to routing, but to story branches in games that produce different game sequences, such as character choices in games like *Octopath Traveler*.

improvising a route for those specific objectives, then finally executing the run as fast as possible. While bingo runs are not mechanically region-exclusive, the objectives are generated in English based on the English terms for characters, items, etc. This makes it inherently difficult for bingo to catch on in communities that consciously or unconsciously avoid game modes that come with linguistic barriers attached.

## Hitboxes and Death Planes

The term “hitbox” is used colloquially in English as a hypernym to describe hit detection in almost any capacity, which can make it problematic for an interpreter who either does not understand the casual usage or who does know the technical usage of the term and hears it being “misused”. While some terms relating to hitboxes have near identical Japanese equivalents, there are terms that are used in reference to hit detection that fall “outside the box” as well.

To begin, it’s useful to understand the technical scope of a hitbox, which Koziel (2019) defines as:

*The area of effect for an attack; anything within it may take damage. For example, if a character shoots an arrow, the hitbox of the attack might cover all of the arrow image.*

For the purposes of our termbase this definition is truncated to the first sentence, and the example is relegated to the “notes” column. The immediate Japanese equivalent is 「当たり判定」 (*atari hantei*), which shares the concepts of “hit” and “detection”. It is equally simple to describe its opposite, the “hurtbox”, which Koziel (2019) describes as:

*The area of effect for receiving damage; if a hitbox overlaps with a hurtbox, the entity attached to the hurtbox takes damage. For example, a character may have a hurtbox corresponding to their image. If a hitbox, such as an attack, occupies the same space as the hurtbox, the character will take damage.*

We again truncate this definition to the first sentence for the sake of simplicity in the termbase and shift the example to the notes. This concept’s Japanese equivalent, 「くらい判定」 (*kurai hantei*), is easily applied when referenced appropriately. This is often the case in fighting

games, where hitboxes and hurtboxes are often disjointed for the sake of allowing more interesting play around spacing, as players need to be conscious that their character might extend or leave behind a vulnerable hurtbox when they perform certain attacks.

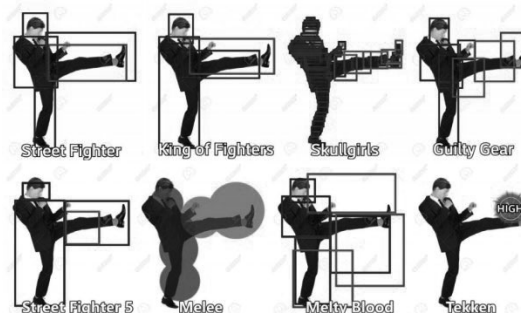


Figure 4. hitboxes (red) and hurtboxes (blue)<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, while fighting games present obvious benefits to distinguishing the two terms, in many games hit detection is a simple function of two boxes touching each other. This has led to the colloquial use of “hitbox” to casually describe the area of any model that handles hits, whether active or passive. The problem can be further conflated by models that utilize hit detection but are not usually thought of as “hits” in English.

The first instance of this in our termbase was the death plane, which is 「死亡判定」 (*shibō hantei*) in Japanese. The usage of *hantei* to describe hit detection is clear, but a death plane in English is generally considered as a single line that kills a character that touches it. In speedrunning, many out-of-bounds routes and other tricks require a keen sense of where death planes exist (or not), which means death planes are often referenced in the commentary.

In addition, English runners will often reference “collision”, which Gameterra defines as “a hitbox that determines how solid an object is in a game world”. This term has nothing to do with hits as relating to damage or death, and merely describes object permeability for the sake of a player being obstructed, stuck, or in the performance of a trick requiring a clever manipulation of the models in the game.

In Japanese, this term falls under the umbrella of *atari hantei* (as general hit detection), which often makes sense in real-time thanks to the additional context of the video footage, but can require exposition if a given trick is particularly complex, or in the unfortunate event that an

<sup>13</sup> ImmobileLavishness on Reddit / Public Domain

interpreter is trying to operate with a considerable amount of lag, which can cause commentary to either fall behind or lead the stream feed by several seconds.

It would be convenient if the colloquial English usage of “hitbox” as a hypernym included collision, but the concepts are distinct in that collision is generally innocuous, while hitboxes refer to hits and damage. This means simply defaulting to an umbrella term such as *atari hantei* for everything in Japanese is not always viable, though creative implementation of *hantei* with other specific descriptors can often fill in the gaps.

## Event Terminology

Speedrunning events are an enormous part of the hobby space, allowing for both organized play in racing-specific games and large-scale events, usually conducted as charity donation drives. The terminology for these events is essential for organizers and runners alike, and as such is some of the most crucial to understand as an interpreter or translator operating in this new, globalized community. Understanding these terms not only helps with coordinating and advertising for future events, but also with explaining preamble, interviews, pre-shows, and recap segments.

Translation problems arose almost at the outset with the concept of “submissions”. Runners who wish to participate in large-scale events need to submit applications for the games they wish to perform—and in English the act of submitting, the package being submitted, and the period in which submissions are accepted are all collectively referred to as “submissions.” As these are three separate concepts, the initial impulse is to create three separate entries, but after they were created only two had readily available Japanese equivalent terms: the act of submitting 「申請」 (*shinsei*) and the submission period 「応募期間」 (*ōbo kikan*). As for the package to be submitted, we have yet to see an organic usage of a nominal construct that represents the artifact package itself. The concept is easily represented as 「提出物」 (*teishutsu-butsumu*) in a pinch, which is the term that currently occupies the term’s slot, but the term is marked in pink, which indicates the need for a better term/idea. *Teishutsu-butsumu* explains what a submission package is well enough, but there is no observed usage of this term in either the Discord channel or any of the Japanese event organization websites.

After the submission period ends, event organizers begin work on the schedule. The schedule is constructed based on estimates provided by the runners in their

submissions package, projected setup time 「準備時間」 (*junbi jikan*), and other specific segments that are important to the purpose of the event such as interviews with charity representatives or recap segments. The estimates of runners was initially flagged as 「予定時間」 (*yotei jikan*) until footage of Japanese events revealed that Japanese event organizers have been using 「予定タイム」 (*yotei taimu*) instead. These estimates are generally accurate, and runners have gotten better at providing accurate estimates over time, but depending on the number of random elements (also known as “RNG”) 「乱数」 (*ransū*) in a run, estimates can vary. The schedule for events is often required to stay flexible, and volunteer commentators as well as hosts can find their scheduled shifts drift by multiple hours over the course of a marathon that lasts an entire week. The term for “setup” is also a potential for miscommunication, as a “setup” 「セットアップ」 (*settoappu*) is also a speedrunning term for “a prescribed sequence of motions intended to bring the player character or other objects in proper alignment for a particular action or trick” (Kozziel 2019, 351). While context usually provides enough clues as to which type of setup is being referenced, in interviews with runners this can be slightly confusing, and the Japanese term for run preparation is not synonymous with the term used when setting up for a trick.

During a charity event, donations 「寄付」 (*kifu*) are generally tracked on stream. In order to promote donations, events employ a variety of strategies, including reading messages attached to donations live on the air, offering donation incentives 「インセンティブ」 (*insentibu*), and organizing “bid wars” 「ビッド・ウォー」 (*biddo u~ō*). Donation incentives are provided by both sponsors and fans and are generally broken up into “blocks”. During a given block of time, usually a series of similarly themed games, a handful of different incentives are promoted with different dollar amounts associated with donations which earn entries into a raffle. The raffle is performed electronically at the end of the event, and winners are notified (in English) through the email they provide when they donate. There are also event-wide incentives, usually illustrious prizes provided by major sponsors, such as the Skytech Gaming Mk. IX Custom Gaming PC donated by Skytech Gaming for Awesome Games Done Quick 2022 Online, which are awarded for cumulative donations over the course of the event (in the case of the gaming PC, \$250 in total donations). Promoting these incentives often represents a large amount of screen time, as they can promote and read donations while organizers are setting up for the next run,



but interpreters need to be wary and communicative with Japanese staff if they are operating over a restream. The communities who host these events are volunteers, not lawyers, and while an organization might indicate that they are willing to ship prizes internationally (these are, after all, heavily internationalized events at this point), regional volunteer staff might worry about possible tax or legal issues involved with expensive prizes, and the preferred policy is often to not verbally promote these incentives and instead fill setup time with chatter or information about the upcoming exhibition. Of course, if a Japanese donator does in fact win a prize, they will receive an email in English informing them of such, which makes the issue of discussing/informing viewers of incentives an ongoing internal debate.

Bid wars are a much less contentious topic, as no prizes or shipping is involved. As such, an EN-JA interpreter can generally feel comfortable relaying discussion around bid wars, provided they understand the concept of the term. In a bid war, viewers donate directly towards a given outcome or choice for a game. The progress of bid wars are generally displayed at regular intervals across a ticker on the bottom of the stream, so international viewers can immediately feel the impact of their donations.



Figure 5. “Bid War” over Fire Emblem Character Route Choice (displayed at bottom of screen)

Examples of bid wars have included: choosing which character or character model to play, naming a file, picking a boss or ending, and even determining which game gets run. While choosing a filename or character name might not seem very appealing to an international audience that may have trouble understanding internet

humor, recent memes, or inside jokes, occasionally the international community will pool together to put their own choice on top, such as when the French restream of Summer Games Done Quick 2022 named the summoned monster Bahamut in Final Fantasy X “Casimir” after the mascot of an old French children’s television show.



Figure 6. French Viewers Name Bahamut “Casimir”<sup>14</sup>

## Other Techniques and Glitches

There are as many different techniques and glitches as there are games to run, and community members are fond of coming up with unique names for the various techniques in their own game. The Dark Souls hitless ruleset above serves as another example here, where individual glitches or techniques are listed in detail, debated, and then evaluated for appropriateness in any given category. The names of individual tricks can be hard for non-runners of the game to understand, but as events are generally aimed at the speedrunning community at large, experienced runners and commentators generally tailor their explanations to be comprehensible to anyone experienced with the hobby in general. In translation, however, some techniques have been noticeably easier to explain than others.

One of the most common techniques is called “clipping” 「壁抜け」 (*kabenuke*), which is “an action or process that results in a player fully or partially entering stage geometry,

<sup>14</sup> By Georges Seguin (Okki) - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

such as walls” (Koziel 2019, 346). As it is such a common technique, references to this type of technique are almost universally referred to as *kabenuke* in Japanese, even when there is no *kabe* (wall) involved. Koziel’s example implies that walls are one of the most common/useful things to clip through, which is certainly the case, but runners will clip through anything and everything that saves time, and this includes the ground, ceiling, objects, other character models, and anything else comprised of geometry. This is indeed reflected in our running Japanese definition of *kabenuke*: 「プレイヤーの一部または全部をステージの外へ押し出す操作」 (*purēyā no ichibu matawa zenbu o sutēji no soto e oshidasu sōsa*). This definition is not restricted to the concept of walls, but is problematic in a different way, as clipping does not necessarily eject a player from a stage.

## Conclusion & Acknowledgements

This project is an ongoing community effort, and special thanks go out to users PinkPajamas, karmina, TK500mile, and nico SNES for their feedback and input on this project. The speedrunning community is the reason this termbase exists, not only as a matter of inception, but as a matter of determined effort by these and other collaborators.

Most of the remaining work is in collecting organic, unprovoked example sentences for each concept in both languages. While entries added after the initial glossary sweep have been easily cited based on the inspiration for their entry, this generally leaves the term entry for one language or the other waiting for translation, and that translation is often not in prevalent usage (e.g., “submissions” as *teishutsu-butsu*—the meaning of the term might be accurate, but Japanese events refer to the action of “recruiting” or “calling for runs” 「申請」 (*shinsei*) in these situations rather than ever mentioning the submission package directly.) Waiting for the equivalent term to naturally arise, noticing that it has, and remembering to update the database is our biggest challenge at this point.

Terminology is not the only challenge to aspiring translators or interpreters interested in contributing to the speedrunning community, but it is often a great place to start when diving into a specialized field. While our termbase project will likely never be “finished” per se, ideally we will be able to provide a launch point for people to get started developing other skills that benefit more from direct experience than research in advance.

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