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A Typology of Gameplay Terminology in Hybrid-Genre Video Games: Evidence from the Korean Translation of Immortals of Aveum

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Abstract

Digital games present distinctive challenges for translation, as gameplay terminology must simultaneously support player interaction and contribute to fictional world building. This study examines how gameplay terminology in the hybrid genre game *Immortals of Aveum* is translated into Korean. Drawing on Pettini's framework for digital

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game terminology, the analysis classifies terms into three conceptual categories: realia, irrealia, and hybrid terminology. A dataset of gameplay-related terms extracted from the Korean translation of the game was analyzed to identify the translation strategies used for each category. The results indicate that recognizable gameplay concepts (realia) are typically translated through semantically transparent translations, while fictional terminology belonging to the game's narrative universe (irrealia) tends to be preserved through transliteration. In addition, the analysis identifies a group of hybrid expressions combining fictional vocabulary with recognizable gameplay descriptors. These terms frequently employ mixed translation strategies that integrate transliteration with semantic translation. The findings suggest that the translation of gameplay terminology is shaped not only by linguistic equivalence but also by the conceptual structure of game terminology and the hybrid design of gameplay systems. The study highlights the need for flexible translation strategies in the translation of hybrid genre games.

Keywords: game translation, gameplay terminology, hybrid terminology, translation strategy, hybrid genre game, realia and irrealia, Immortals of Aveum

1. Introduction

Digital games pose distinctive challenges for translation studies as language in games serves both representational and functional purposes. Gameplay terminology does more than convey narrative information; it also forms part of the interactive systems through which players engage with the game world. Terms appearing in user interfaces, ability descriptions, and combat mechanics contribute to the construction of the fictional setting while at the same time guiding player actions.

For this reason, translating gameplay terminology involves balancing two overlapping demands. On the one hand, the translation should

preserve the narrative identity of the fictional world. On the other hand, players must be able to understand immediately what role a term plays within the gameplay system. Unlike traditional literary or audiovisual translation, where texts are generally encountered in a linear and interpretive manner, game localization requires terminology to remain instantly intelligible during gameplay (Bernal-Merino 2015; Kim 2022; O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013).

Practically, this requirement becomes particularly visible from the player's perspective during gameplay. For this reason, the translation of game terminology involves more than semantic transfer between languages. It must also maintain the clarity required for interaction within the game environment. This dual function of language has been widely discussed in studies of audiovisual and digital media translation, where linguistic elements often serve both communicative and operative (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007; Pérez-González 2014, 2018).

These translation challenges become particularly complex in games that combine multiple genre traditions. Modern game design increasingly integrates mechanics drawn from various gameplay models, producing hybrid genres that merge distinct systems and conventions (Apperley 2006; Juul 2005; Newman 2012). In such contexts, translators work with terminology that reflects overlapping mechanical and narrative frameworks. Terms originating from one genre may appear alongside terminology from another, creating linguistic environments that are both structurally and conceptually hybrid.

Immortals of Aveum, published by Electronic Arts, provides a useful example for examining these issues. Instead of conventional firearms, the player's primary means of combat consists of magical abilities arranged into color-coded spell systems. At the same time, many aspects of gameplay, including movement, targeting, and combat

spacing, are closely aligned with first-person shooter (FPS) design conventions. The outcome is a gameplay system in which fantasy terminology describing magical abilities coexists with mechanics typical of the shooter genre.

From a translation perspective, this hybrid structure yields a complex terminological environment. Translators are faced with choices between phonetic borrowing to preserve well-established genre terms, semantic translation adaptation strategies, or even hybrid strategies combining both. Previous research on game translation suggests that translators often negotiate between maintaining globally recognizable terminology and ensuring accessibility for players in the target language (Bernal-Merino 2015; O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013).

Research on game localization has grown considerably over the past decade. However, the translation of gameplay terminology, especially in games that combine multiple genre traditions, has received relatively limited attention. Many existing studies discuss broader localization practices or focus primarily on narrative translation in digital media (Bernal-Merino 2015; Fernández-Costales 2012). By comparison, the linguistic challenges created by hybrid gameplay terminology remain less explored.

This study focuses on the Korean translation of gameplay terminology in *Immortals of Aveum*. It examines how gameplay-related terms are translated and how these translation choices relate to the game's hybrid genre structure. Particular attention is given to the use of transliteration, semantic translation, and mixed strategies. The analysis explores how translators balance these approaches when adapting specialized gameplay terminology for Korean players. In doing so, the study highlights broader patterns in the localization of hybrid genre games and shows how hybrid gameplay systems tend to generate hybrid terminological environments that require flexible translation strategies.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Digital Game Translation

Digital game translation has become one of the more prominent areas within translation studies over the last two decades, following the fast growth of the international games industry. Unlike traditional forms of translation, the translation of digital games takes place within interactive systems in which narrative content, gameplay mechanics, and user interfaces are closely interconnected. As O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) point out, translators working on digital games must consider not only linguistic equivalence but also how players encounter and interpret text while actively interacting with the game environment.

A number of scholars have emphasized that the translation of digital games differs from other forms of audiovisual translation because of this interactive dimension. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2006) note that game translators frequently operate under technical and spatial constraints, including interface limitations and the need to maintain consistent terminology across large volumes of text. Bernal-Merino (2015) similarly argues that translation involves balancing narrative fidelity with functional readability, since many translated terms directly affect how players understand gameplay systems and mechanics.

The growth of international game markets has further increased the importance of translation in making games accessible to players in different linguistic and cultural contexts. According to Chandler and Deming (2011), game localization projects often involve extensive terminology management and collaboration among large development teams in order to ensure consistency across gameplay systems and

narrative content. Despite the growing body of research on game localization, relatively limited attention has been given specifically to the translation of gameplay terminology. This is notable because many gameplay terms function both as narrative elements and as operational components within game mechanics.

2.2. Theoretical Framework for Gameplay Terminology

Within translation studies, terminology has long been considered a central issue in the translation of specialized texts. Terminology refers to lexical units that designate specific concepts within structured knowledge domains. As Sager (2012) points out, the accurate use of terminology is essential for maintaining conceptual precision and coherence in specialized communication, while Cabré (1999) highlights the role of terminology in organizing knowledge within specific domains.

From the perspective of translation practice, terminology can present difficulties when specialized concepts do not have direct equivalents across languages. Differences in how languages categorize and structure concepts often complicate lexical equivalence at the word level (Baker 2018). Therefore, translators should adopt strategies that convey the intended meaning while remaining compatible with the linguistic conventions of the target language. Translation decisions often involve balancing semantic accuracy with communicative clarity and readability (Munday 2016).

Although terminology research has traditionally focused on scientific and technical domains, similar issues arise in digital media environments. Digital games frequently introduce complex systems involving abilities, mechanics, and fictional technologies, each associated with specialized vocabulary. The terminology used to describe these systems functions in ways comparable to technical

vocabulary in other specialized fields, requiring translations that remain both conceptually precise and linguistically transparent.

One concept that has received much attention in translation studies is that of *realia*, which generally refers to lexical items that denote culture-specific objects, institutions, or practices. Vlahov and Florin (1980) describe *realia* as linguistic elements reflecting the social and cultural characteristics of a particular community and often lacking direct equivalents in other languages. Since these items are closely tied to specific cultural contexts, their translation frequently requires decisions about how much of the source cultural reference should be preserved in the target text.

A related concept appears in Aixelá's (1996) discussion of culture-specific items, which refers to textual elements that carry strong associations with the source culture and may therefore require adaptation in translation

2.2.1. Realia and Irrealia in Digital Games

Although the notion of *realia* was originally developed in relation to culturally bound references in literary translation, similar issues arise in fictional media. Fantasy narratives, for instance, frequently introduce newly created terminology referring to objects, institutions, or systems that exist only within the fictional universe. As Davies (2003) notes, translators working with fantasy texts must often render invented lexical items whose meanings are defined by the internal logic of the narrative world.

In digital games, the translation of such terminology becomes particularly complex as the fictional vocabulary often performs functional roles within gameplay systems. Terms referring to abilities, weapons, or mechanics do not merely contribute to narrative atmosphere but also guide player interaction with the game

environment. Translators must therefore ensure that such terminology remains both conceptually clear and consistent with the fictional world in which it operates.

Building on previous discussions of culture-specific terminology, Pettini (2022) proposes a framework specifically designed to analyze lexical items that appear in digital game translation. Her study offers one of the most detailed examinations of how translators deal with terminology that emerges from the interaction between real-world cultural references and fictional narrative systems within digital games.

In Pettini's framework, a key distinction is drawn between *realia* and *irrealia*. *Realia* refer to lexical items associated with concepts that can be recognized outside the fictional universe of the game. These may include references derived from real-world cultural contexts as well as terminology that reflects widely established gameplay conventions across particular game genres. Because such terms correspond to familiar conceptual domains, their translation often focuses on clarity and accessibility for players.

Irrealia, in contrast, refer to lexical items that designate entities created entirely within the fictional universe of the game. These terms frequently describe elements such as magical systems, fictional technologies, or invented narrative concepts whose meanings are defined by the internal logic of the game world. As Pettini (2022) argues, the translation of *irrealia* presents distinct challenges because these terms lack direct equivalents outside the fictional system in which they appear. Translators must therefore preserve the internal coherence of the fictional world while ensuring that players can still understand the function of the terminology during gameplay.

2.2.2. Challenges and Hybridity in Genre Mixing Games

This distinction becomes particularly relevant in games that combine recognizable genre conventions with newly constructed fictional systems. In such cases, the terminology of the game may include elements that correspond to familiar real-world concepts alongside elements that derive entirely from the fictional logic of the narrative universe.

Building on Pettini's framework, this study analyzes gameplay terminology in *Immortals of Aveum* by dividing it into realia, irrealia, and a third category consisting of hybrid terms that combine features of both domains. The presence of hybrid terminology reflects the genre structure of the game itself, which integrates conventional first-person shooter mechanics with an internally constructed magical system. Pettini's framework, therefore, provides the conceptual basis for examining how translation strategies operate across different categories of gameplay terminology in the translation of the game.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study examines how gameplay terminology from a hybrid genre digital game is translated into Korean. The analysis focuses on a systematic examination of translated terminology within a single commercially released title. This approach allows for a detailed investigation of translation strategies operating within a specific interactive digital environment.

The study follows the general perspective of descriptive translation studies, which aims to observe translation practices as they appear in

real contexts rather than prescribing ideal solutions (Toury 1995). From this viewpoint, the research investigates how translators deal with specialized terminology created by hybrid genre design, where elements of different gameplay traditions coexist within the same system.

Accordingly, the analysis considers both the translation strategies used in the Korean translation and the conceptual categories of gameplay terminology proposed by Pettini (2022). Examining the interaction between these elements makes it possible to identify broader patterns in the translation of gameplay terminology in hybrid genre games.

3.2. Data Selection

The dataset analyzed in this study consists of gameplay-related terminology drawn from the official Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*, a first-person magic shooter developed by Ascendant Studios and published by Electronic Arts. This game combines first-person shooter mechanics with fantasy magic systems, reflecting a broader tendency in modern game design to blend different gameplay conventions (Juul 2010). The game was selected as the case study because it represents a hybrid genre that combines traditional first-person shooter mechanics with a fantasy magic system. This hybrid structure generates a distinctive set of gameplay terminology reflecting both shooter conventions and fantasy elements.

Unlike many classic shooters that primarily rely on firearms and military vocabulary, *Immortals of Aveum* bases its combat system around magical abilities, spell-based weapons, and color-coded magical factions. As a result, it introduces a range of specialized terms that do not fit neatly within established genre terminology. These features make the title particularly suitable for examining how

translators adapt emerging hybrid genre terminology during translation.

To maintain analytical consistency, the study focuses specifically on gameplay-related terminology defined as terms that directly describe mechanics, abilities, or system functions. Proper nouns such as character names, narrative locations, and story-specific entities were excluded unless they also function as gameplay mechanics. For example, names of magical factions or abilities influencing combat behavior were included, whereas purely narrative references were excluded.

This data was collected by manual inspection of the translated gameplay text in order to identify recurring terms that play a functional role within the game system. After filtering and verification, a total of 158 gameplay-related terms were selected for analysis. The full list of terms is provided in Appendix 1.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework used in this study combines translation strategy analysis with terminology classification in order to examine how gameplay terminology has been translated into Korean. The analysis, therefore, draws on both general translation theory and recent research on terminology in digital game translation.

Research on game translation has also highlighted the challenges posed by newly created terminology. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) note that translators frequently encounter gameplay vocabulary that lacks established equivalents in the target language. According to Bernal Merino (2015), in such cases, translation decisions often involve a mixture of transliteration and semantic adaptation, especially when translators work with emerging genre terminology.

In addition to these perspectives, the study adopts Pettini's (2022) framework for analyzing terminology in digital games. Pettini

distinguishes between realia, which refer to terms grounded in recognizable cultural or genre conventions, and irrealia, which describe elements created entirely within the fictional universe of the game. This distinction provides a useful basis for examining gameplay terminology that operates simultaneously within familiar gameplay traditions and newly constructed fictional systems.

As *Immortals of Aveum* combines recognizable shooter mechanics with an internally constructed magical system, this study introduces a third category extending Pettini's framework: hybrid terminology. Hybrid terms combine features of both realia and irrealia, reflecting expressions that draw simultaneously on familiar genre conventions and fictional world-building. This expanded classification allows the analysis to capture the linguistic complexity produced by hybrid genre design.

Alongside this terminology classification, the study also examines the main translation strategies used in the Korean version of the game. Three strategies appear consistently throughout the dataset: transliteration, semantic translation, and a mixed approach that combines elements of both.

Transliteration refers to the phonetic adaptation of an English term into Korean orthography while preserving a pronunciation close to that of the original expression. This strategy is commonly used when gameplay terminology has already become recognizable within international gaming discourse. Semantic translation prioritizes conveying the meaning of the source term rather than preserving its phonetic form. This approach is typically employed when the gameplay concept can be clearly expressed through existing Korean vocabulary. In other cases, translators employ a hybrid strategy that combines elements of transliteration and semantic translation. This occurs when a term contains both a recognizable gameplay expression and a descriptive component that benefits from semantic clarification

in the target language.

Based on this, an analytical framework has been developed for classifying gameplay terminology and identifying translation strategies within the dataset. Based on this framework, each term in the dataset was systematically categorized according to both its conceptual type and the translation strategy used in the Korean version of the game. The following section describes the procedure used to apply this classification.

3.4. Classification Procedure

After the dataset was established, each term was analyzed according to two analytical dimensions. First, the term was assigned to one of the conceptual categories derived from Pettini's framework: realia, irrealia, or hybrid terminology. Second, each term was categorized according to the translation strategy used in the Korean version of the game.

The classification process involved comparing each English source term with its Korean translation. Particular attention was paid to the structural relationship between the two forms, including whether the translation preserved the phonetic structure of the original expression, conveyed its semantic meaning through Korean vocabulary, or combined elements of both approaches.

In cases where the classification of a term was not possible, the in-game context in which the term appeared was examined. Since gameplay terminology often derives part of its meaning from its functional role within the game system, surrounding interface text and gameplay descriptions were reviewed in order to clarify the conceptual category of the term.

Once all terms were classified, the distribution of the dataset across terminology categories and translation strategy was calculated. The results of this classification are summarized in Table 1. These

quantitative observations were then complemented by qualitative analysis of selected examples discussed in Section 4.

Table 1. Distribution of Terminology Categories and Translation Strategies

Terminology Category	Transliteration	Semantic Translation	Hybrid	Total
Realia	24 (40%)	34 (57%)	2 (3%)	60 (100%)
Irrealia	62 (90.0%)	5 (7.2%)	2 (2.8%)	69 (100%)
Hybrid	9 (31%)	8 (27.5%)	12 (41.5%)	29 (100%)
Total	95 (60%)	47 (30%)	16 (10%)	158 (100%)

4. Analysis

4.1. Dataset and Analytical Framework

This section examines how gameplay terminology from *Immortals of Aveum* is translated into Korean. The analysis focuses on terminology found in the gameplay interface and explains how the game system works for the player. These terms are found in various contexts, including ability descriptions, combat feedback messages, and interface elements that communicate the effects of gameplay actions.

The terminology dataset used in this study was extracted from translation databases used during the Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*. These databases were provided by the publisher for research purposes and include both glossary resources and dialogue data used during the translation process. As the databases contain a wide range

of lexical items, including character names, location names, narrative terminology, and gameplay expressions, the dataset required additional filtering. In order to examine gameplay terminology, narrative terms usually associated with story elements are excluded.

After removing duplicates and filtering narrative-specific entries, the dataset consisted of gameplay-related terminology used in the game's interface and gameplay systems. These terms describe the lexical layer through which players interpret gameplay mechanics and system feedback.

Gameplay terminology differs from narrative dialogue in several important respects. Narrative dialogue primarily advances the story and contributes to character development. Gameplay terminology, by contrast, functions as part of the operational interface through which players interact with the game system. Players use these terminologies to understand mechanics, interpret system feedback, and make decisions during gameplay. As O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) state, game localization often involves translating language that is tightly integrated with gameplay systems rather than purely narrative content. Bernal-Merino (2015) similarly observes that gameplay terminology must convey system information clearly while remaining consistent with the stylistic identity of the game world.

The terminology in the dataset was classified according to the analytical framework outlined in the previous section. The following analysis examines representative examples of realia, irrealia, and hybrid terminology in the Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*.

4.2. Realia: Recognizable Gameplay Concepts

When terminology corresponds to recognizable gameplay concepts, translators tend to favor semantic transparency in order to maintain interface readability. This strategy allows players to interpret gameplay

information quickly without encountering unnecessary linguistic barriers.

One example from the dataset is Spell, translated into Korean as 주문 (*jumun*). Spells within this gameplay represent magical abilities that the player can activate during combat. The Korean translation employs a widely recognized term associated with magical incantations. As a result, the meaning of the term remains immediately accessible to Korean-speaking players.

Another example is Mark, translated as 표식 (*pyosik*). This refers to a visual indicator applied to enemies during combat. Semantic translation expresses such a function directly so that the player can grasp the mechanic without further explanation.

Similarly, Health translates into 체력 (*cheryeok*). The concept of a health resource is widely used across many digital games, and the Korean term 체력 is commonly used to describe this gameplay mechanic. Since the concept already exists within Korean gaming jargon, the translation maintains both clarity and familiarity.

These examples illustrate how semantic translation is commonly used when gameplay terminology corresponds to familiar concepts (Table 2).

Table 2. Examples of Realia in the Dataset

English Term	Korean Translation	Romanization
Spell	주문	<i>jumun</i>
Mark	표식	<i>pyosik</i>
Health	체력	<i>cheryeok</i>
Control	컨트롤	<i>keonteurol</i>
Shield	실드	<i>sild</i>

4.3. Irrealia: Fictional Lexicon of the Game World

In contrast to realia, irrealia refer to terminology that belongs primarily to the fictional world of the game and does not correspond directly to the real-world concepts or generally accepted gameplay mechanics. In the Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*, such expressions are typically translated through transliteration, preserving the phonetic structure of the original English term while adapting it to Korean orthography (Table 3). This retains the stylistic character of the game’s fictional terminology while keeping the expressions accessible to Korean gamers.

Table 3. Examples of Irrealia in the Dataset

English Term	Korean Translation	Romanization
Sigil	시길	<i>sigil</i>
Arclight	아크라이트	<i>akeuraiteu</i>
Arcanum	아르카눔	<i>areukanum</i>
Lucium	루시움	<i>rusium</i>

The term Sigil, translated as 시길 (*sigil*), is a key part of the magical combat system in *Immortals of Aveum*. Within gameplay, sigils are magical constructs that structure several combat mechanics and appear in expressions such as Blue Sigil Strike and Green Sigil Strike. It is not a descriptive noun but a core category of gameplay in the magical system of the game. Since the concept does not correspond to a real-world object or widely recognized gameplay mechanic, the Korean translation preserves the phonetic form of the original term through transliteration. A semantic translation such as 문양 (*moonyang*)

or 인장 (*injang*) would have brought the term into unwanted relations with existing Korean concepts and reduced its value as a distinctive element in the game's terminology.

The ability name Arclight, translated as 아크라이트 (*akeuraiteu*), refers to a specific magical ability within the combat system of *Immortals of Aveum*. It is not a semantically translatable descriptive phrase but a proper name of an ability. Its meaning is defined primarily through gameplay usage and the internal logic of the game's magical system. A semantic translation could therefore introduce unintended associations or reduce the stylistic uniqueness of the ability name. Instead, the Korean translation preserves the phonetic structure of the original term through transliteration, allowing the ability name to retain its identity within the game's proprietary terminology.

The term Arcanum, translated into Korean as 아르카눔 (*areukanum*), is a magical system that underlies spellcasting and magical abilities within the world of *Immortals of Aveum*. While the English word has traditionally referred to arcane knowledge, within the game, it is a term that belongs to the game's fictional lexicon. Therefore, the translated form retains the phonetic structure of the original term and is not semantically translated. In this way, the internal consistency with the magical terminology in the game is maintained, and no unintended conceptual associations are brought into Korean.

Lucium, translated as 루시움 (*rusium*), is a fictional element in the narrative universe of *Immortals of Aveum*. The term does not correspond to an identifiable concept in Korean vocabulary and functions instead as part of the game's proprietary world-building terminology. Transliteration preserves the phonetic structure of the original name while maintaining consistency with the stylistic conventions used for other fictional terms in the translation. Hence, the name remains recognized within the story world.

4.4. Hybrid Terminology: Interaction between Gameplay Systems and Fictional Vocabulary

Although many expressions in the dataset can be easily identified as either realia or irrealia, the analysis also revealed terminologies that combine elements of both categories. These expressions are described here as hybrid terminology, as they combine familiar gameplay descriptors with fictional terminology from the narrative universe of the game (Table 4).

Table 4. Examples of Hybrid Terminology in the Dataset

English Term	Korean Translation	Romanization
Leyline Tower	레이라인 탑	<i>reirain tap</i>
Mana Crystal	마나 크리스털	<i>mana keuriseuteol</i>
Portal Stone	포탈 스톤	<i>potal seuton</i>

For example, Leyline Tower, translated into Korean as 레이라인 탑 (*reirain tap*), illustrates how gameplay terminology in *Immortals of Aveum* often combines fictional world-building vocabulary with descriptive gameplay language. In this case, the Leyline element functions as part of fictional vocabulary used throughout the game world. The noun Tower denotes an environmental feature familiar to players through exploration and combat. The expression, therefore, integrates a fictional lexical element with a concrete gameplay descriptor, forming a hybrid terminology structure.

The term Mana Crystal, translated into Korean as 마나 크리스털 (*mana keuriseuteol*), is also a hybrid term combining fictional terminology with a concrete gameplay object. The element Mana belongs to the magical vocabulary commonly used in fantasy game

worlds and functions as a fictional resource associated with spellcasting systems. The noun Crystal denotes a category of concrete objects appearing within gameplay environments. Thus, this term refers to a fictional magical resource and a concrete gameplay object.

Another example of hybrid terminology in the dataset is Portal Stone, translated as 포탈 스톤 (*potal seuton*). The term Portal is part of the fictional vocabulary related to magical transportation in the game world. At the same time, the noun Stone refers to a tangible object category that appears in gameplay environments. The expression, therefore, combines a fictional lexical item with a concrete gameplay descriptor. In Korean translation, Portal is transliterated as 포탈, and Stone is translated as 스톤, a loanword frequently used in Korean gameplay. This mixed strategy maintains the hybrid structure of the original expression while ensuring that it remains meaningful to the player concerning the gameplay objects.

Hybrid terminology demonstrates how gameplay language often reflects the intersection of mechanical systems and fictional world-building. As Juul (2005) notes, digital games combine rule-based systems with fictional narrative worlds. The terminology that emerges from these systems, therefore, reflects both gameplay functions and narrative identity.

Several hybrid expressions in the dataset follow a recurring structural pattern in which a fictional or gameplay-related element is combined with a concrete object descriptor. Examples of such formations include X Crystal and Y Stone, where the first element refers to a magical resource or ability while the second element denotes a tangible object category. This pattern illustrates how the terminology of *Immortals of Aveum* integrates fictional vocabulary with recognizable gameplay objects. Such expressions will thus be subject to hybrid translation strategies, as they can be translated by transliteration plus an object descriptor that is semantically transparent.

4.5. Distribution of Terminology Categories

While the previous sections examined representative examples of each terminology category, the overall distribution of these categories within the dataset also provides insight into how gameplay terminology is structured in *Immortals of Aveum*. Examining the frequency of realia, irrealia, and hybrid terminology provides additional insight into how gameplay language is structured in *Immortals of Aveum*.

After filtering the translation database and removing duplicates, the dataset consisted of 158 gameplay-related terms. Each term was categorized according to the previously developed analytical framework into realia, irrealia, and hybrid terminology. The resulting distribution is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of Terminology Categories

Category	Number of Terms	Percentage (%)
Realia	60	38
Irrealia	69	43.7
Hybrid	29	18.4
Total	158	100

The results show that irrealia is the most significant category in the dataset with 43.7% of the terminology analyzed. This distribution reflects the fantasy setting of *Immortals of Aveum*, where a significant portion of the gameplay vocabulary is tied to fictional magical systems and narrative world-building elements. Terms such as Sigil, Arcanum, and Lucium are part of the game's proprietary lexicon; hence, they fall under this category.

Realia constitutes the second largest category, representing approximately 38% of the dataset. These terms correspond to recognizable gameplay concepts such as combat indicators, resource systems, and ability mechanics. As such concepts appear frequently across different games and genres, translators can typically render them using existing vocabulary in the target language.

Hybrid terminology represents a smaller but nevertheless significant portion of the dataset. Several hybrid expressions follow typical structural patterns, such as combinations of fictional elements with object descriptors (e.g., X Crystal or Y Stone). Approximately 18.4% of the analyzed terms combine elements of both realia and irrealia within a single expression. These hybrid structures typically emerge when gameplay descriptors interact with fictional world-building vocabulary. Expressions such as Leyline Tower or Mana Crystal illustrate this pattern, combining recognizable gameplay objects with fictional magical terminology.

Hybrid terminology thus points to the relationship between gameplay systems and narrative world-building in modern digital games. As Juul (2005) argues, digital games operate simultaneously as rule-based systems and fictional worlds. The terminology used in gameplay interfaces, therefore, often reflects both dimensions. In *Immortals of Aveum*, this interaction produces terminology that cannot be fully explained by either realia or irrealia alone.

From a translation perspective, the distribution of terminology categories also corresponds closely to the translation strategies observed in the Korean translation. Realia tend to be translated through semantic translation, ensuring that gameplay mechanics remain immediately understandable to players. Irrealia, by contrast, are typically translated through transliteration in order to preserve the stylistic identity of fictional terminology. Hybrid expressions frequently combine these two strategies, resulting in translated terms that integrate

semantic clarity with the preservation of fictional vocabulary.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that gameplay terminology in *Immortals of Aveum* reflects a balance between functional clarity and fictional identity. Translation thus follows two priorities: clarity in gameplay mechanics and maintaining the game's unique lexical identity.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Translation Strategy Patterns

The analysis reveals a clear relationship between the conceptual nature of gameplay terminology and the translation strategies used in the Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*. Terms classified as realia tend to be semantically transparently translated, corresponding to terms already present in the gaming vocabulary. Since they refer to recognizable gameplay features, using already familiar vocabulary also allows the players to convey gameplay information more quickly and accurately during the interactive sequence.

By contrast, terms categorized as irrealia are mainly preserved through transliteration. These expressions belong to the fictional lexicon of the game world, and maintaining their phonetic form helps preserve the stylistic identity of the game's magical system. Rather than relying on explicit semantic explanation, players typically learn the meaning of such terms through repeated exposure during gameplay.

This suggests that translation choices are informed by the existence of a functional gameplay system beyond linguistic correspondence. In this sense, the translation of gameplay terminology involves balancing system readability with the preservation of fictional world-building.

Indeed, previous studies have indicated that translation often entails an operation of distance reflecting both linguistic constraints and interpretive choices within the target language (Lee 2008).

5.2. Hybrid Genre Terminology

While Pettini's (2022) distinction between realia and irrealia provides a useful analytical framework for understanding gameplay terminology, the findings of this study indicate that the terminology systems of hybrid genre games often extend beyond this binary distinction. In *Immortals of Aveum*, many gameplay expressions combine recognizable mechanical structures with fictional vocabulary derived from the game's magical combat system. Terms such as Mana Crystal or Leyline Tower exemplify how fictional magical terminology interacts with recognizable gameplay objects and environmental structures.

Hybrid genre, therefore, generates hybrid terminology that occupies an intermediate position between realia and irrealia. These terms draw simultaneously on familiar gameplay conventions and fictional narrative elements, making them difficult to classify within a strictly binary framework.

Hybrid terminology reflects the structural characteristics of the game itself. *Immortals of Aveum* incorporates many gameplay mechanics that resemble those found in first-person shooter games, including defensive systems, ability activation mechanics, and equipment-based combat interactions. At the same time, these mechanics are embedded within a fictional magical framework that introduces its own symbolic and narrative structures.

In this regard, the translator faces the two challenges of getting the gameplay elements to feel recognizable to players as established within the genre while at the same time owning vocabulary that feels

unique to the fictional magical system of the game world's diegetic environment.

The mixed translation strategies observed in the dataset reflect this dual requirement. Hybrid expressions frequently combine transliteration with semantic translation, allowing translated terminology to retain both functional clarity and narrative identity. This underlines that the translators' choices were sensitive to the conceptual structure underpinning gameplay terminology rather than one unifying strategy.

5.3. Implications for Game Translation

The findings of this study contribute to research on digital game translation by demonstrating how the conceptual structure of gameplay terminology influences translation strategy. While previous studies have emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation and player accessibility in game localization (Bernal-Merino 2015; O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013), the analysis highlights the role of genre structure in shaping translation practices.

More specifically, the results suggest that hybrid genre games may require particularly flexible translation strategies. When a game integrates multiple gameplay traditions, its terminology system often reflects overlapping conceptual domains. Different requirements between system transparency, genre convention, and narrative immersion must be balanced in translating gameplay terminology for a new linguistic audience.

In this context, Pettini's (2022) distinction between *realia* and *irrealia* remains a valuable analytical starting point for understanding how digital game terminology relates to both real-world references and fictional world-building. At the same time, the findings of this study indicate that hybrid genre games frequently generate expressions that combine features of both categories. This study,

therefore, shows that gameplay terminology in hybrid genre games cannot always be fully explained through a strict binary distinction between realia and irrealia.

By examining the Korean translation of *Immortals of Aveum*, this study demonstrates how translators navigate the interaction between familiar gameplay conventions and newly constructed fictional terminology. The analysis shows that translation strategies do not operate through a simple choice between transliteration and semantic translation. Instead, translators employ a range of flexible strategies that respond to the conceptual structure of the gameplay term itself.

More broadly, the study suggests that future research on digital game translation may benefit from examining how genre design influences the structure of gameplay terminology. As digital games increasingly combine elements from multiple genres, the interaction between genre conventions and fictional world-building is likely to play an increasingly important role in shaping translation practices. Understanding this relationship may provide a useful direction for future studies in game translation.

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Appendix 1. *Immortals of Aveum* Terminology

Term Classification – Realia/Irrealia/Hybrid

Realia (60)

No.	English	Korean
1	Animate	애니메이트
2	Ascensions	어센션
3	Augment	증진
4	Bash	배시
5	Blink	블링크
6	Colossal	거상
7	Demon	악마
8	Control	컨트롤
9	Corruption	오염
10	Dagger	대거
11	Disrupt	디스럽트
12	Dominion	도미니언
13	Fane	사원
14	Farcall	원거리 통신
15	Font	폰트
16	Force	포스

17	Fury	퓨리
18	Gauntlet	건틀렛
19	Glyph	문양
20	Grapple	그래플
21	Havoc	하복
22	Health	체력
23	High Magnus	고위급 마그누스
24	Hover	호버
25	Immolate	이멸레이트
26	Immortals	불멸자
27	Initiate	신입
28	Inventory	보관함
29	Lash	래시
30	Life	생명력
31	Lights Army	빛의 군대
32	Magic	마법
33	Mandate	의무
34	Mark	표식
35	Melee	근접 공격
36	Order	기사단
37	Order Elite	엘리트 기사단

38	Pale Forest	창백한 숲
39	Path	통로
40	Party	파티
41	Raid	공습
42	Retreat	후퇴
43	Ritual	의식
44	Selection	선발 시험
45	Shatter	새터
46	Shield	실드
47	Shred	파괴
48	Shrouded Realm	숨겨진 왕국
49	Spear	침병
50	Spectrals	환영
51	Spell	주문
52	Siege	공성전
53	Strike	스트라이크
54	Torrent	토런트
55	Totem	토템
56	Vault	금고
57	Vortex	볼텍스
58	War Chamber	상황실

59	Spear	침병
60	Wound	상흔

Irrelia (69)

No.	English	Korean
1	Aelori	에일로이
2	Arcanum	아르카눔
3	Archon	아칸
4	Arclight	아크라이트
5	Aristeya	아리스테아
6	Aveum	아베움
7	Babs	뱍스
8	Belming	벨밍
9	Blastwave	블래스트웨이브
10	Breachfire	브리치파이어
11	Burstfire	버스트파이어
12	Caleb	케일럽
13	Crownsgate	크라운스게이트
14	Damolie	다몰리
15	Deepmere	깊은 소용돌이
16	Devyn	데빈

17	Fragfire	프래그파이어
18	Gatterond	가터룬드
19	Gestalt	게슈탈트
20	Glaivegate	글레이브게이트
21	Greyveil	그레이베일
22	Harrows	헤로우
23	Hauser	하우저
24	Havensheer	헤이븐시어
25	Hexbrand	헥스브랜드
26	Howler	하울러
27	Iopalet	아이오팔렛
28	Jak	잭
29	Kalth	칼수스인
30	Kalthus	칼수스
31	Kenzie	켄지
32	Kileylean	카일리안
33	Kirkan	커칸
34	Kleylish	케일리인
35	Lavenry	라벤리
36	Leyline	레이라인
37	Leylodon	레이로돈

38	Lordsfell	로드펠
39	Lucian	루시움인
40	Lucium	루시움
41	Maelstrom	마엘스트롬
42	Mala-Dar	마라-다르
43	Morbane	모르베인
44	Nocea	노체아
45	Oremen	오레멘
46	Orphe	오르페
47	Palathon	팔라톤
48	Pentacade	펜타케이드
49	Rasharn	라산
50	Rook	룩
51	Sandrakk	산드락
52	Seekershards	시커샤드
53	Selko	셀코
54	Seren	세렌
55	Shrikebolt	스트라이크볼트
56	Shrineforge	고대 신전
57	Sigil	시길
58	Silas Mede	실라스 미드

59	Stormshards	스톰샤드
60	Thaddeus	타데우스
61	Thrada-Kul	스라다-쿨
62	Timeburst	타임버스트
63	Underdwell	지하도시
64	Veki	베키
65	Wound's Edge	상흔 가장자리
66	Wraithwind	죽음의 땅
67	Yhl-Qal	일-칼
68	Yltheum	일테움
69	Zendara	젠다라

Hybrid (29)

No.	English	Korean
1	Binding Stone	바인딩 스톤
2	Chronieler Construct	크로니클 컨스트럭트
3	Everwar	영원전쟁
4	Greyveil Plaza	그레이베일 광장
5	Hand of Sandrakk	산드락의 오른팔
6	Harrow's Edge	해로우 변두리
7	Hinters	배후지

8	House Ariken	아리켄 가문
9	House Arjitane	아르타네 가문
10	House Ark Kellon	아크 켈론 가문
11	House Belming	벨밍 가문
12	House Kaduss	카두스 가문
13	House Thairiven	타이리븐 가문
14	Leyline Tower	레이라인 탑
15	Library of Akoth	아코스 도서관
16	Mana Bar	마나 바
17	Mana Crystal	마나 크리스털
18	Mount Dresnyr	드레스닐 산
19	Nightblades	나이트블레이드
20	Oathbroken	깨어진 서약
21	Portal Stone	포탈 스톤
22	Scrylight	예언의 눈
23	Shroudfane	비밀 사원
24	Thayven's Point	타이븐 포인트
25	Tower of Masks	가면의 탑
26	Triarch	트라이아크
27	Underbridge	아랫동네
28	Wardbreaker	워드브레이커
29	Woundrift	균열