US012220638B2

(12) **United States Patent**
**Iwao**

(10) **Patent No.: US 12,220,638 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Feb. 11, 2025**

(54) **STORAGE MEDIUM STORING GAME PROGRAM, GAME SYSTEM, GAME APPARATUS, AND GAME PROCESSING METHOD**

(71) Applicants: **Nintendo Co., Ltd.**, Kyoto (JP); **The Pokémon Company**, Tokyo (JP)

(72) Inventor: **Kazumasa Iwao**, Tokyo (JP)

(73) Assignees: **NINTENDO CO., LTD.**, Kyoto (JP); **THE POKÉMON COMPANY**, Tokyo (JP)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **18/776,729**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 18, 2024**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2024/0367050 A1 Nov. 7, 2024

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Division of application No. 18/652,874, filed on May 2, 2024, which is a continuation of application No. 17/949,666, filed on Sep. 21, 2022.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Dec. 22, 2021 (JP) ................................ 2021-208275

(51) **Int. Cl.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *A63F 13/57* | (2014.01) |
| *A63F 13/52* | (2014.01) |

(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ............ *A63F 13/577* (2014.09); *A63F 13/52* (2014.09); *A63F 13/56* (2014.09)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC ........ A63F 13/20; A63F 13/21; A63F 13/219; A63F 13/22; A63F 13/23; A63F 13/25;
(Continued)

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2012/0157201 | A1* | 6/2012 | Mizutani | A63F 13/213<br>463/31 |
| 2020/0114253 | A1 | 4/2020 | Maruyama | |
| 2022/0080313 | A1 | 3/2022 | Wu | |

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CN | 112044071 | 12/2020 |
| JP | 2011-024613 | 2/2011 |

(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

HRK unconscious game record, Giant beast that manipulates freezing! Defeat the Ice Titan! ARK [Extinction] Episode 20, YouTube [online] [video], Dec. 12, 2020, <https://www.you tube.com/watch?v=KjOVKPqSByA>, see video time [02:23]-[05:32] [Search date: Aug. 15, 2023] pp. 1-6.

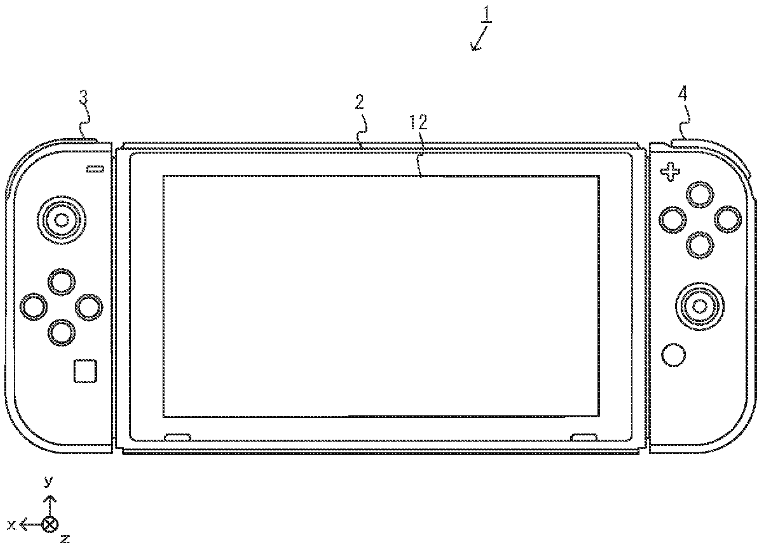
(Continued)

*Primary Examiner* — Omkar A Deodhar
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Nixon & Vanderhye, PC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

In a first mode, an aiming direction in a virtual space is determined based on a second operation input, and a player character is caused to launch, in the aiming direction, an item that affects a field character disposed on a field in the virtual space, based on a third operation input. In a second mode, the aiming direction is determined, based on the second operation input, and the player character is caused to launch, in the aiming direction, a fighting character that fights, based on the third operation input.

**20 Claims, 26 Drawing Sheets**



(51) **Int. Cl.**

| | |
|---|---|
| ***A63F 13/56*** | (2014.01) |
| ***A63F 13/577*** | (2014.01) |

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC ........ A63F 13/426; A63F 13/44; A63F 13/45; A63F 13/50; A63F 13/52; A63F 13/525; A63F 13/5252; A63F 13/53; A63F 13/537; A63F 13/55; A63F 13/56; A63F 13/58; A63F 13/69; A63F 13/70; A63F 13/812

See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| JP | 2014-045888 | 3/2014 |
| JP | 2020-039403 | 3/2020 |
| JP | 2020-058659 | 4/2020 |
| KR | 10-2019-0131559 | 11/2019 |

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

[ARK] A list of tools available for taming (PC version), Dolls dream in 4.5 tatami mats [online], [Apr. 8, 2020], <https://stelladia.club/game/ark/tame-tool/>, see the column "Tools that can be used to make a coma" [Search date: Aug. 16, 2023] pp. 1-20.

[MHW] How and the way to capture monsters, It is a basic way to capture large monster with the anesthetic ball using a trap, without forgetting to weaken it, ARUTORA, Jan. 30, 2018, [Search date: Aug. 16, 2023] <https://arutora.com/14874#5>, see the text and figures; pp. 1-5.

Capcom, Lower screen operation during quest, Monster Hunter 4 | Official Web manual, stored on May 12, 2014, [Search date: Aug. 16, 2023] <https://web.archive.org/web/20140512070052/http://game.capcom.com:80/manual/MH4/ja/page-26.html>, see the column "Target Camera" (possibly as early as May 12, 2014.) pp. 1-3.

[Pokemon GO] Tips on how to catch! Commentary regarding the capture rate-, Game with, Oct. 11, 2019, [Search date: Aug. 17, 2023] <https://pokemongo.gamewith.jp/article/show/26440 >, see the column "Relationship between capture rate and circles" pp. 1-8.

Samiad, [MHP3] Reached 100 Nargacuga hunted, Was it burned well?, Aug. 8, 2011, [Search date: Aug. 8, 2023] <samiadoraven.blog31.fc2.com/blog-entry-768.html>, see the text and figures; pp. 1-6.

[ARK Mobile] Two secrets that castroides (Beaver) must be tamed!, ARK Strategy wiki, Dec. 28, 2018, [Search dated: Aug. 16, 2023] <https://70okugame.com/ark/%E3%80%90ARK%E3%83%A2%E3%83%90%E3%82%A4%E3%83%AB%E3%80%91%E3%82%AB%E3%82%B9%E3%83%88%E3%83%AD%E3%82%A4%E3%83%87%E3%82%B9>, see the column "Method of operating Castroides" pp. 1-7.

Capcom, Item collecting / stripping-off , Monster Hunter 4 Official Web manual, stored on Oct. 16, 2014, [Search date: Aug. 16, 2023] <https://web.archive.org/web/20141016031929/http://game.capcom.com:80/manual/MH4/ja/page-49.html>, see the text and figures (possibly as early as Oct. 16, 2014.) pp. 1-3.

[KanColle] Explanation on transport gauge | Kantai Collection (KanColle) Strategy wiki, Game Ranbu, stored on Jun. 26, 2019, [Search date: Aug. 16, 2023] <https://web.archive.org/web/20190626023829/https://gameranbu.jp/kancolle/d645dca6a06bc701f7ea>, see the column "The method of reducing a transportation gauge" (possibly as early as Jun. 26, 2019) pp. 1-5.

Office Action issued in Japanese Patent Application No. 2021-208275 on Aug. 23, 2023, pp. 1-8 [machine translation included].

"Catching Wild Pokemon," the Pokemon Company, Available Online At: https://www.pokemon.com/us/strategy/pokemon-rpgs-101, Retrieved from online on Dec. 8, 2021, 15 pages.

[Pokemon Go] Summary of the probability of Capture, GameWith [online], May 19, 2021 URL: https:pokemongo.camewithip/article/show/61741, 8 pages.

Notice of Allowance issued on May 17, 2024 for Japanese Patent Application No. 2024-026645, 8 pages (with translation).

* cited by examiner

FIG. 1

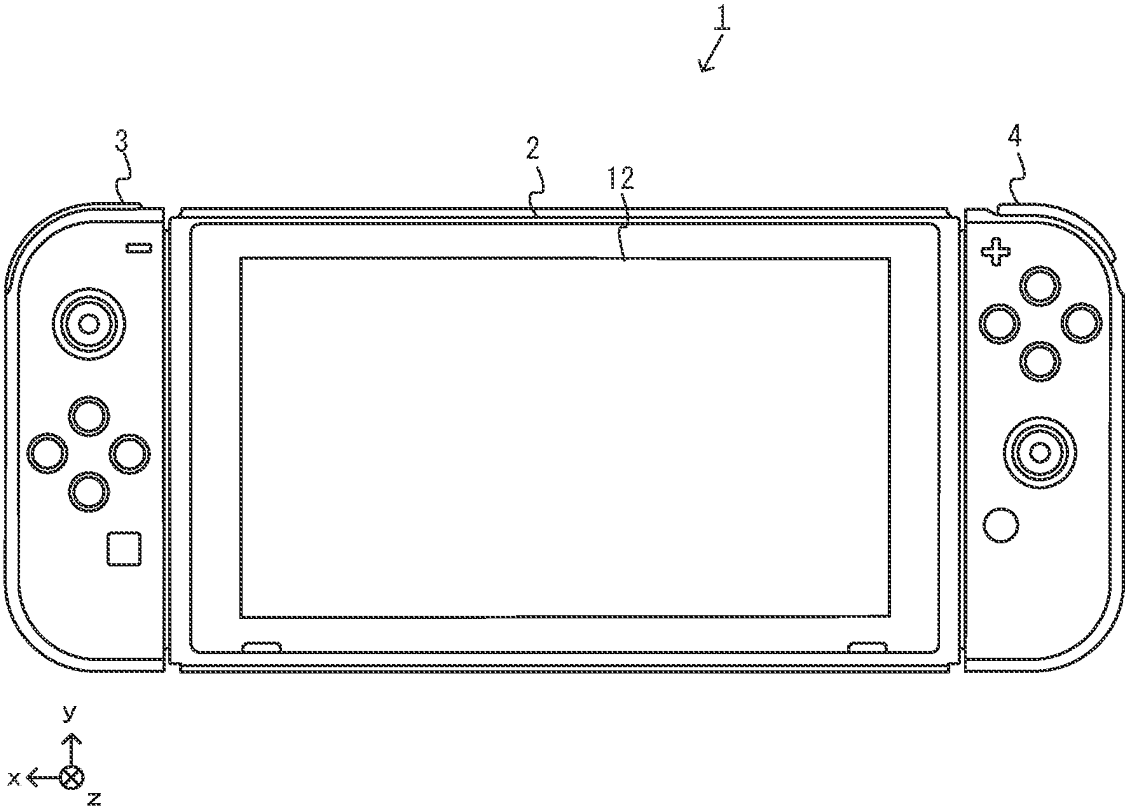
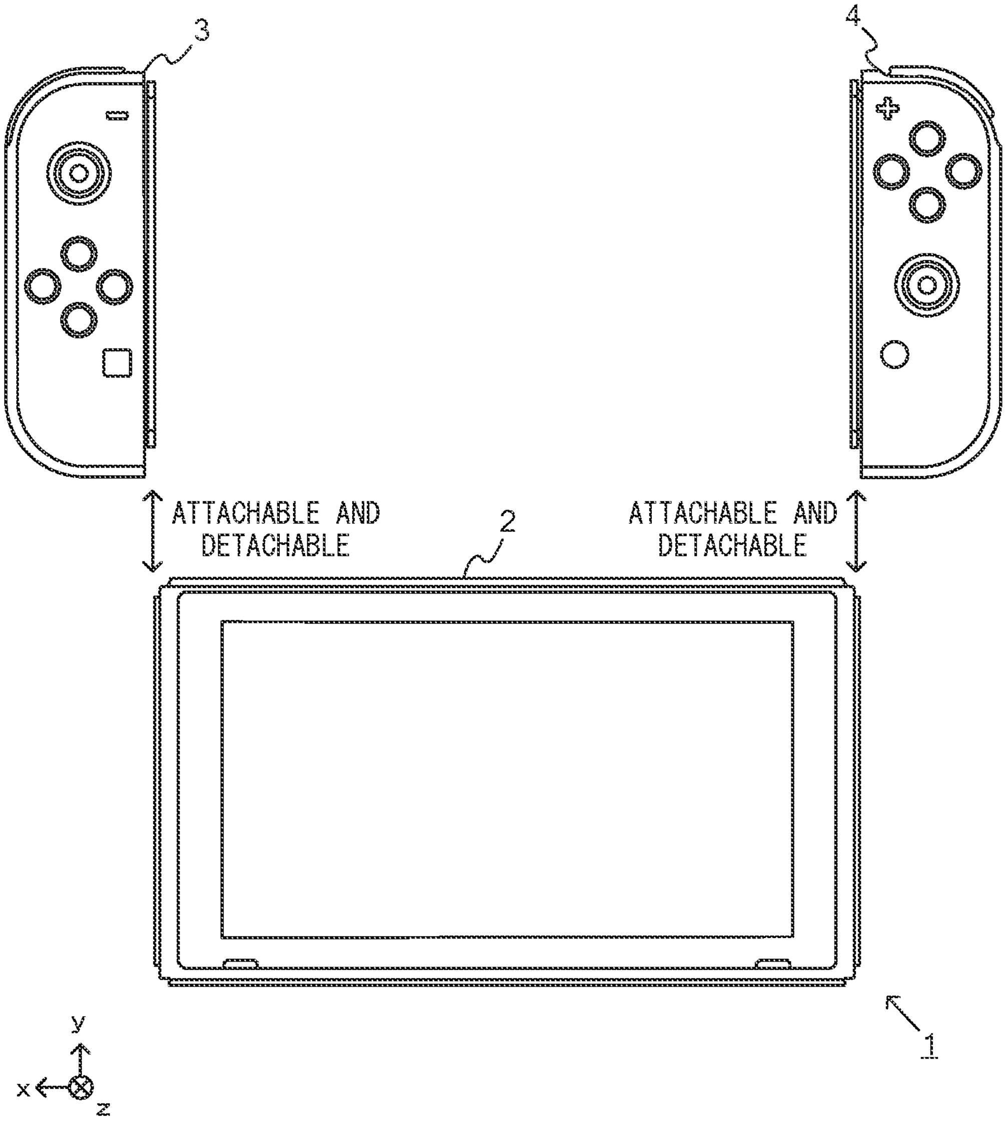
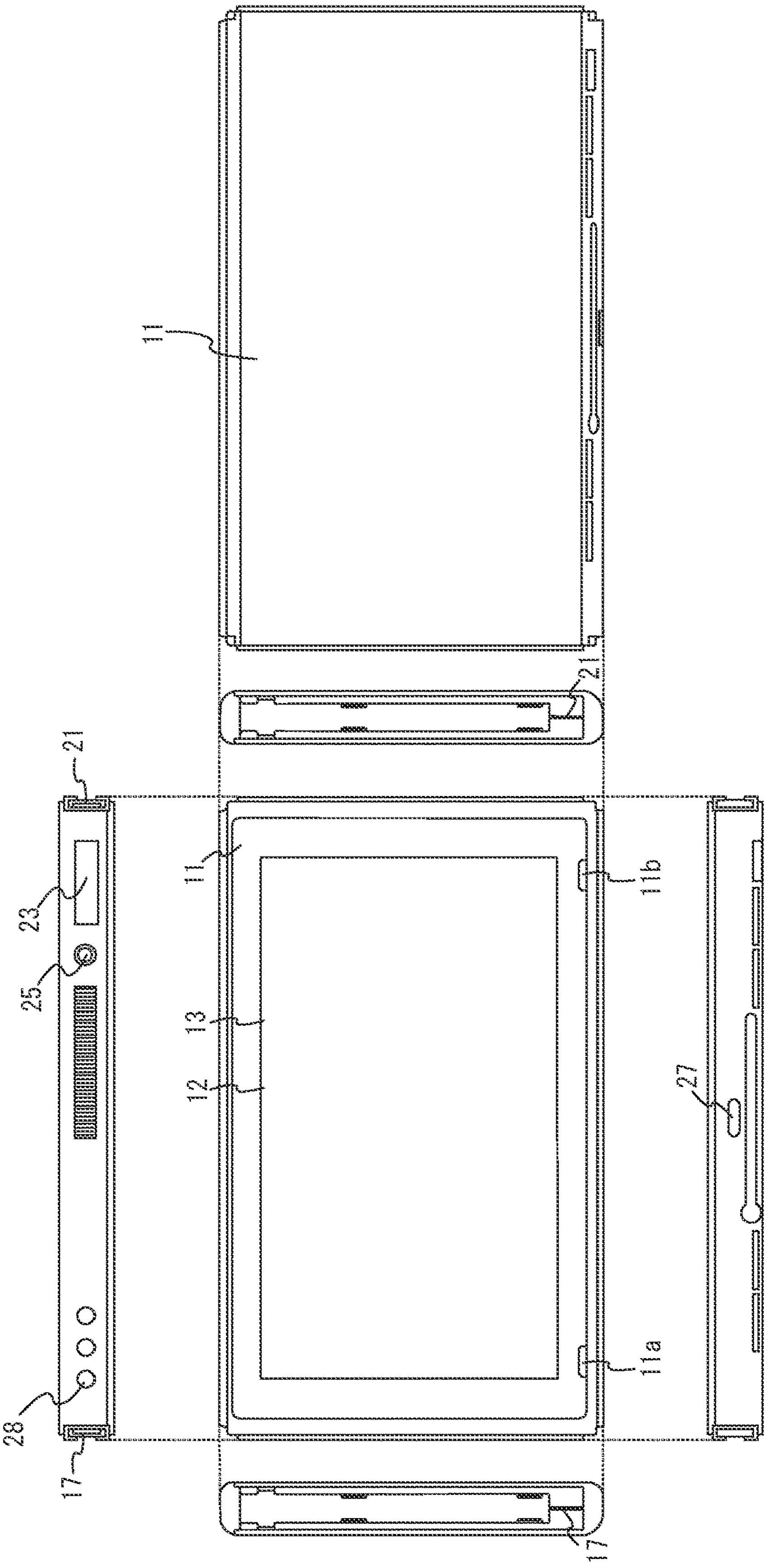


FIG. 2


3
4
ATTACHABLE AND DETACHABLE
2
ATTACHABLE AND DETACHABLE
1
y
x
z



F I G. 3

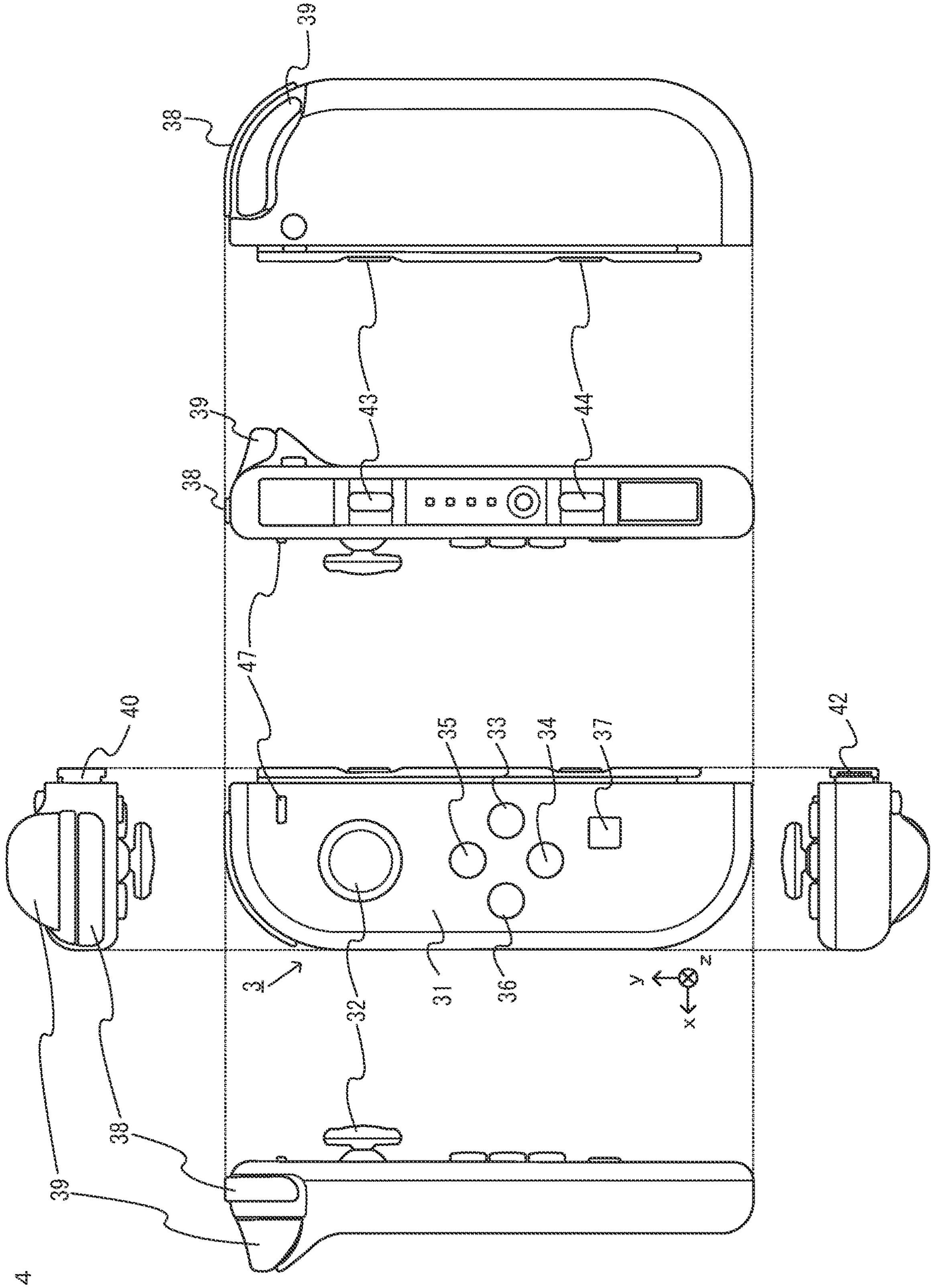


FIG. 4

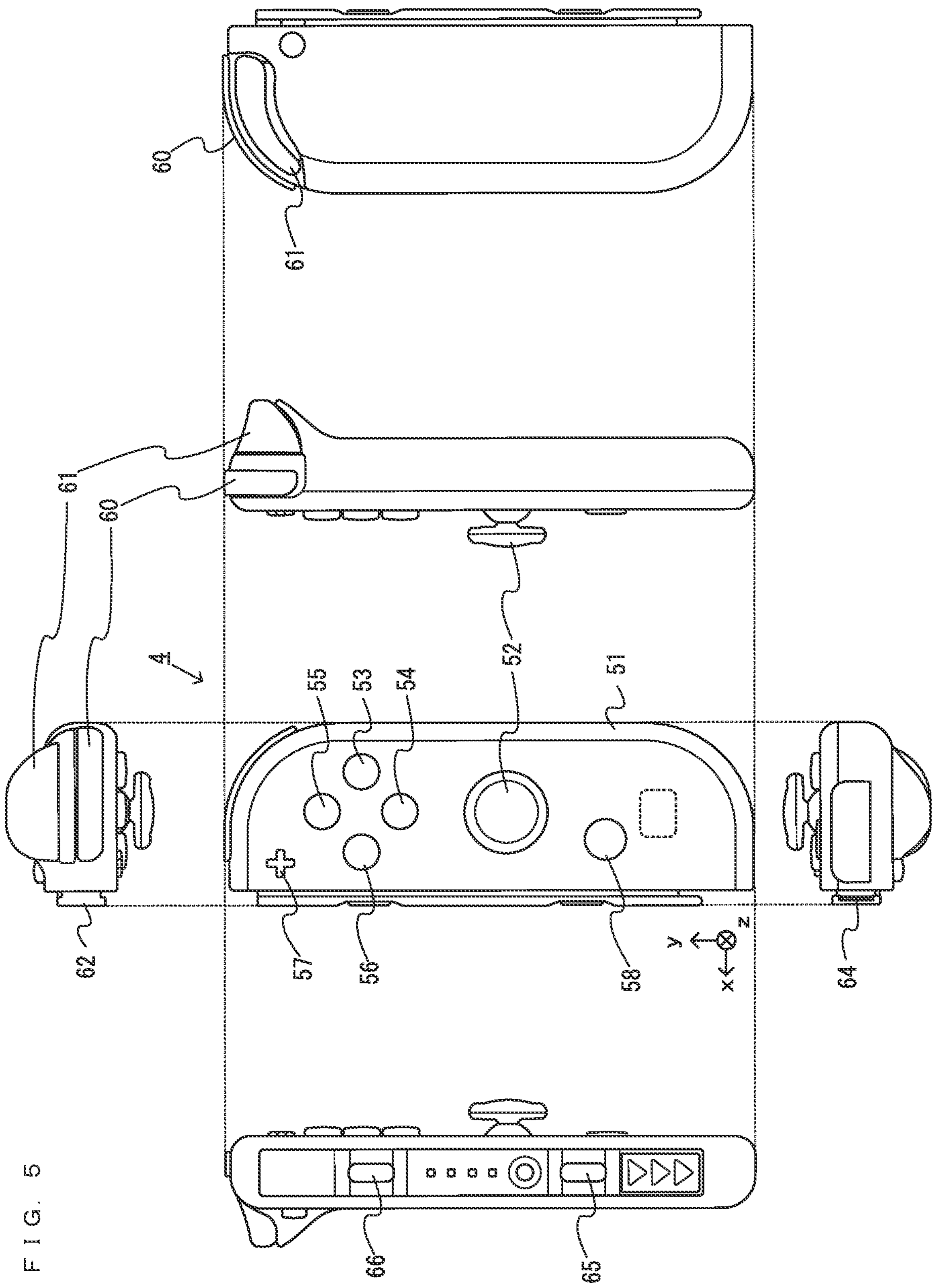


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

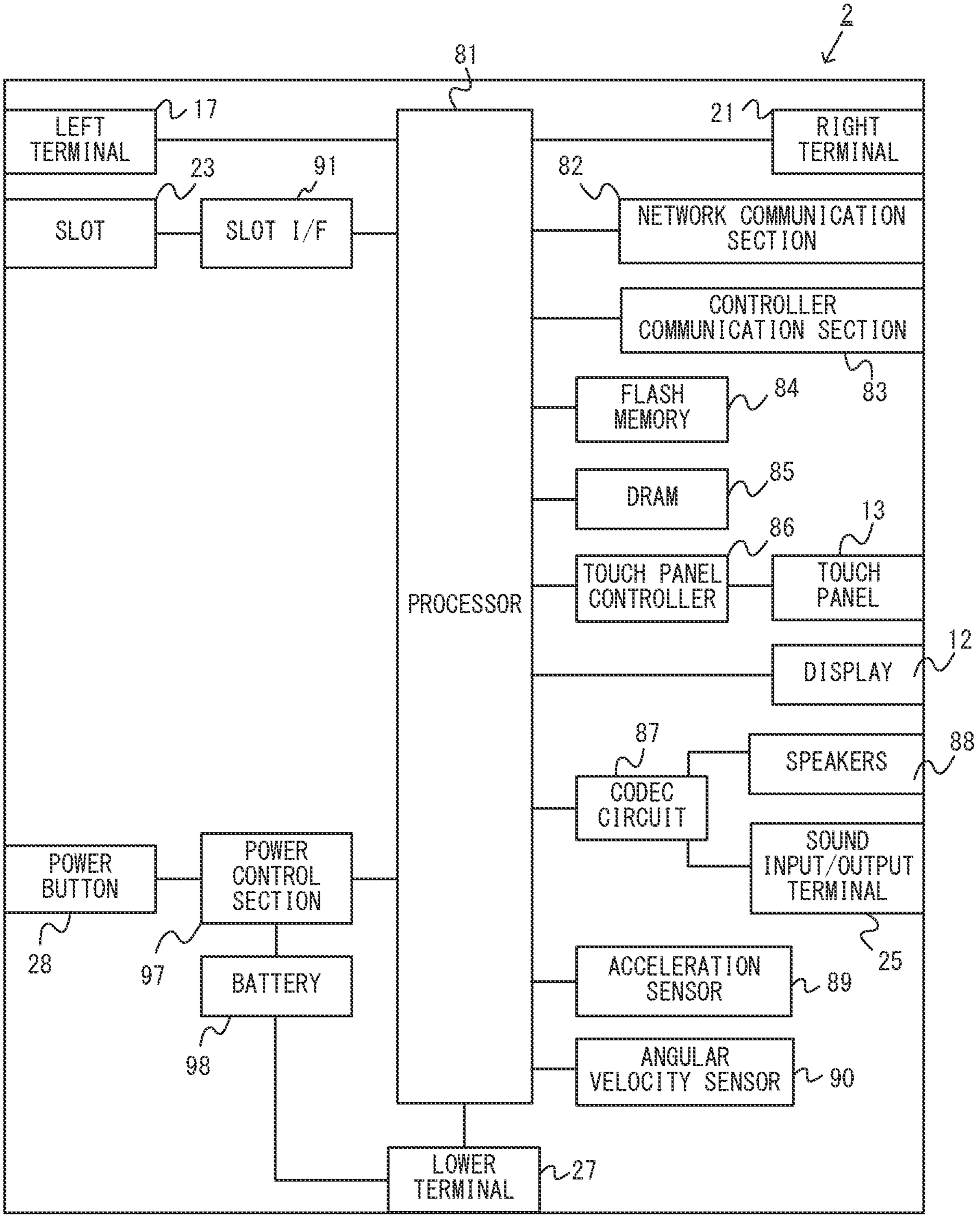
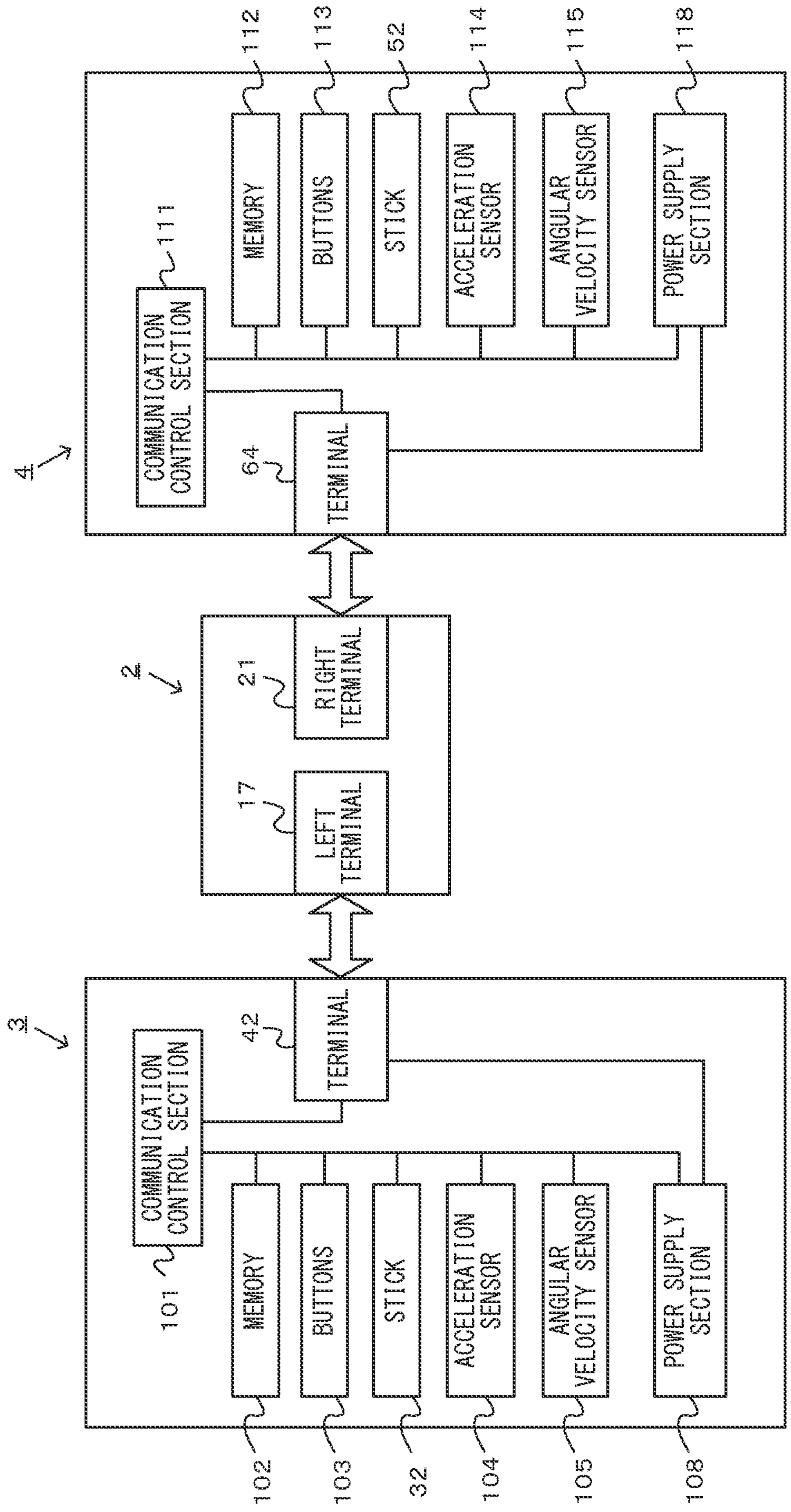

2
81
LEFT TERMINAL
17
21
RIGHT TERMINAL
23
91
82
SLOT
SLOT I/F
NETWORK COMMUNICATION SECTION
CONTROLLER COMMUNICATION SECTION
83
FLASH MEMORY
84
DRAM
85
86
13
TOUCH PANEL CONTROLLER
TOUCH PANEL
PROCESSOR
DISPLAY
12
87
SPEAKERS
88
CODEC CIRCUIT
SOUND INPUT/OUTPUT TERMINAL
POWER BUTTON
POWER CONTROL SECTION
28
97
BATTERY
25
ACCELERATION SENSOR
89
98
ANGULAR VELOCITY SENSOR
90
LOWER TERMINAL
27

FIG. 7


3
COMMUNICATION CONTROL SECTION
101
TERMINAL
42
MEMORY
102
BUTTONS
103
STICK
32
ACCELERATION SENSOR
104
ANGULAR VELOCITY SENSOR
105
POWER SUPPLY SECTION
108
2
LEFT TERMINAL
17
RIGHT TERMINAL
21
4
COMMUNICATION CONTROL SECTION
111
TERMINAL
64
MEMORY
112
BUTTONS
113
STICK
52
ACCELERATION SENSOR
114
ANGULAR VELOCITY SENSOR
115
POWER SUPPLY SECTION
118

F I G. 8

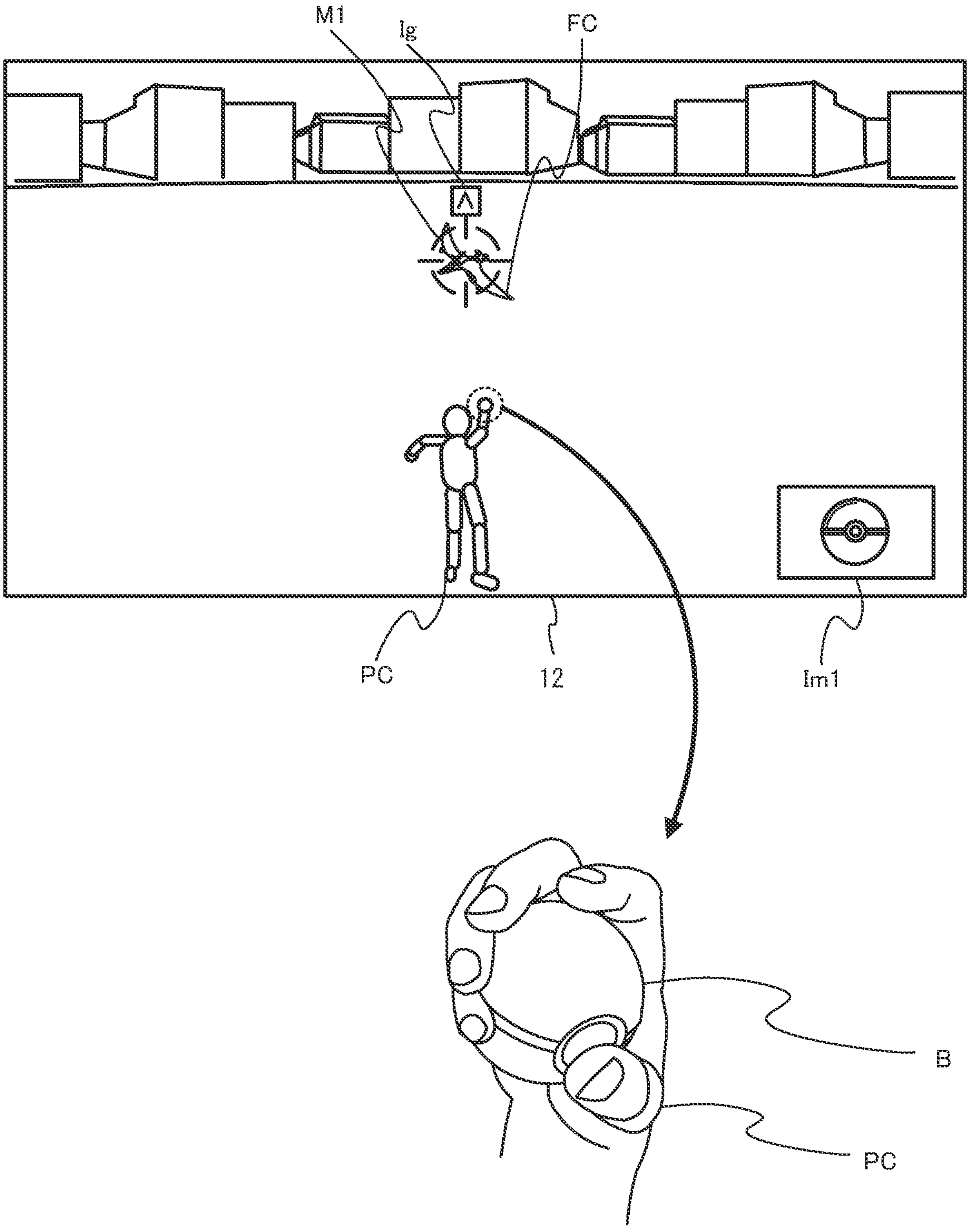


FIG. 9

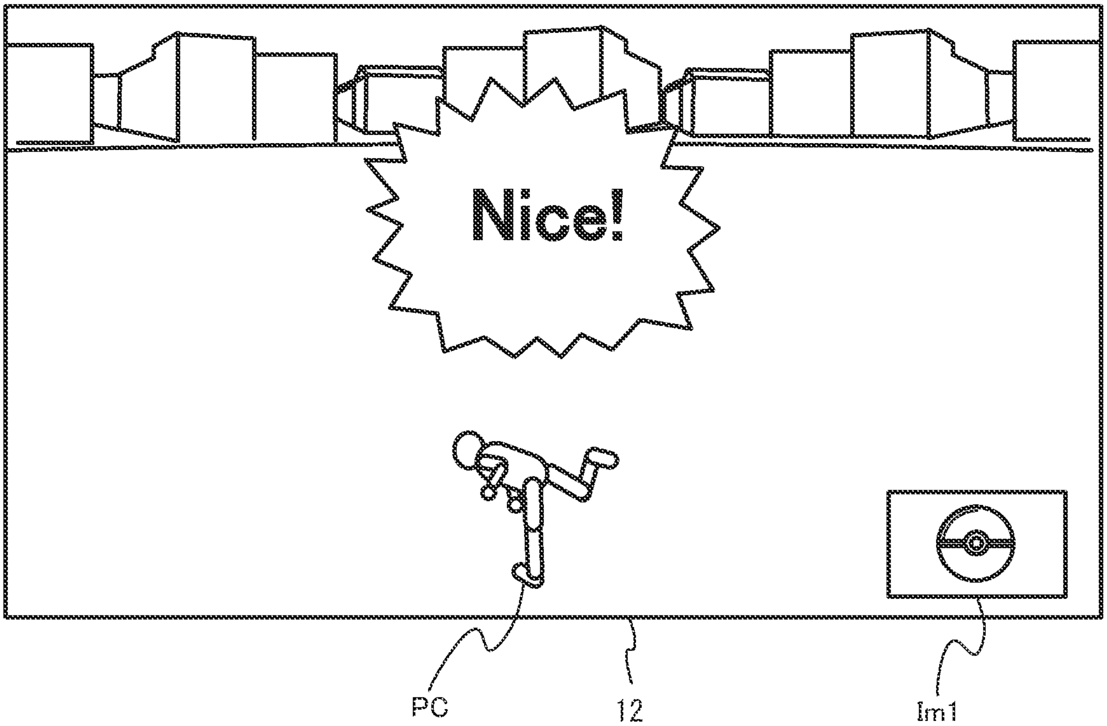


FIG. 10

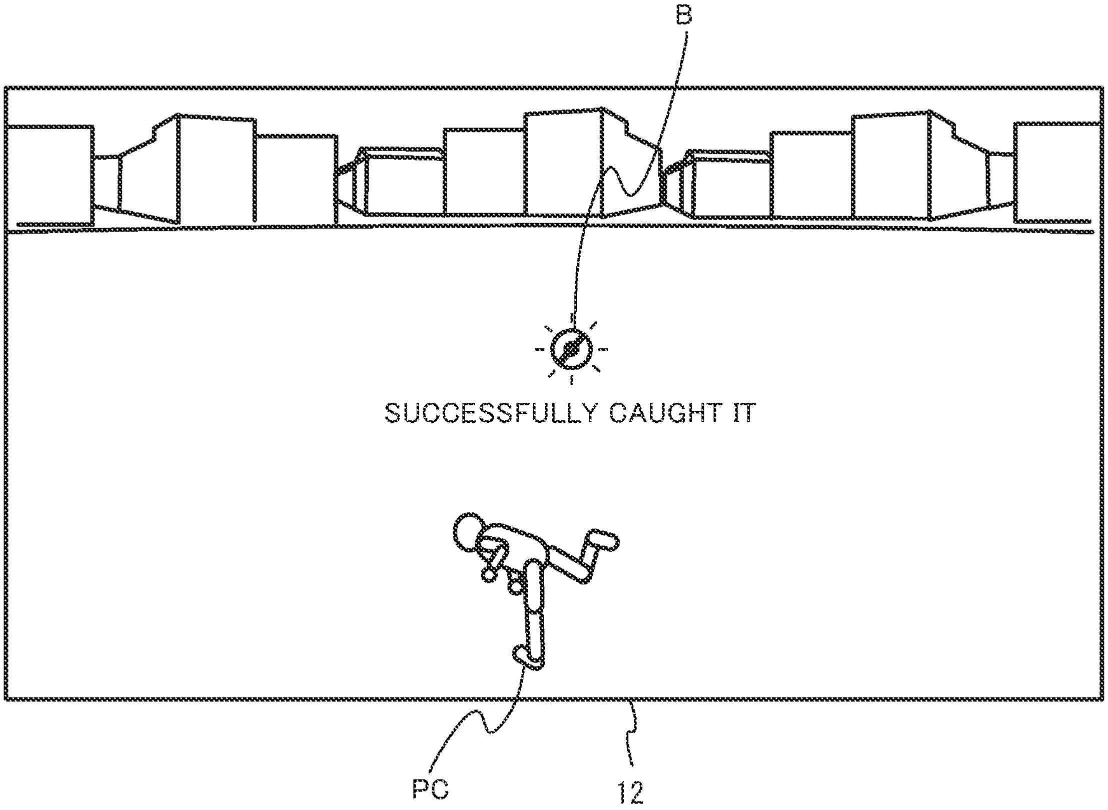


FIG. 11

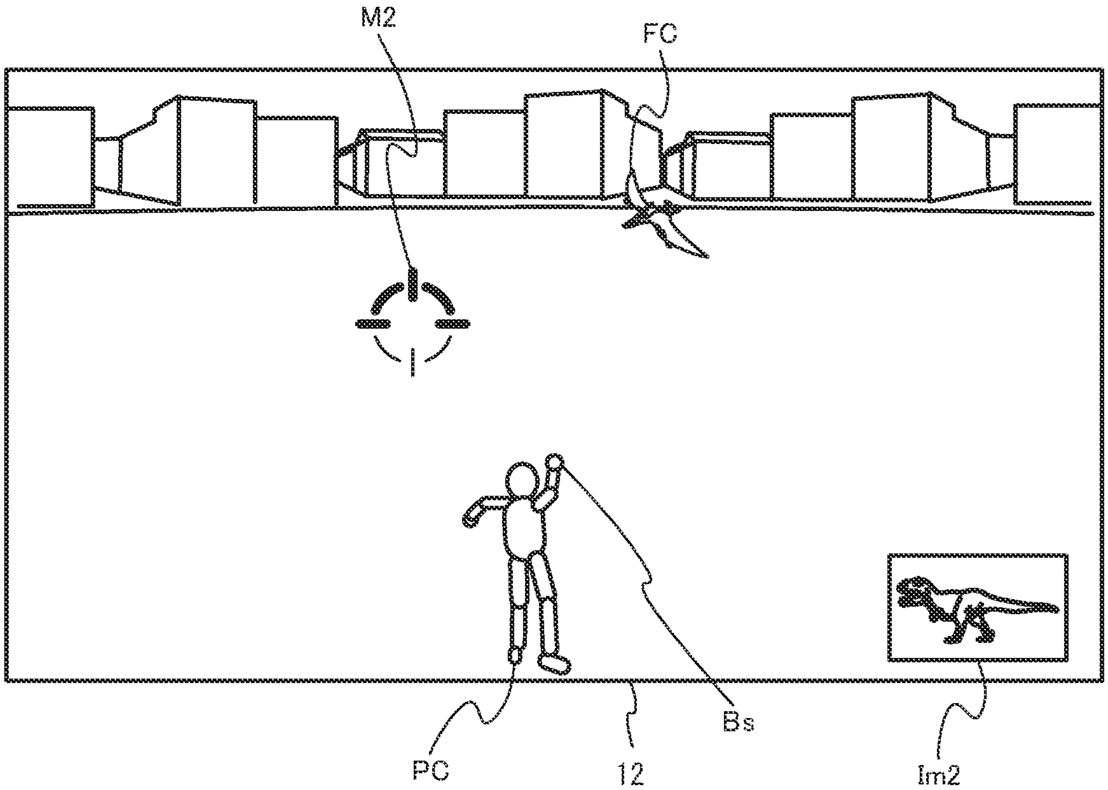


FIG. 12

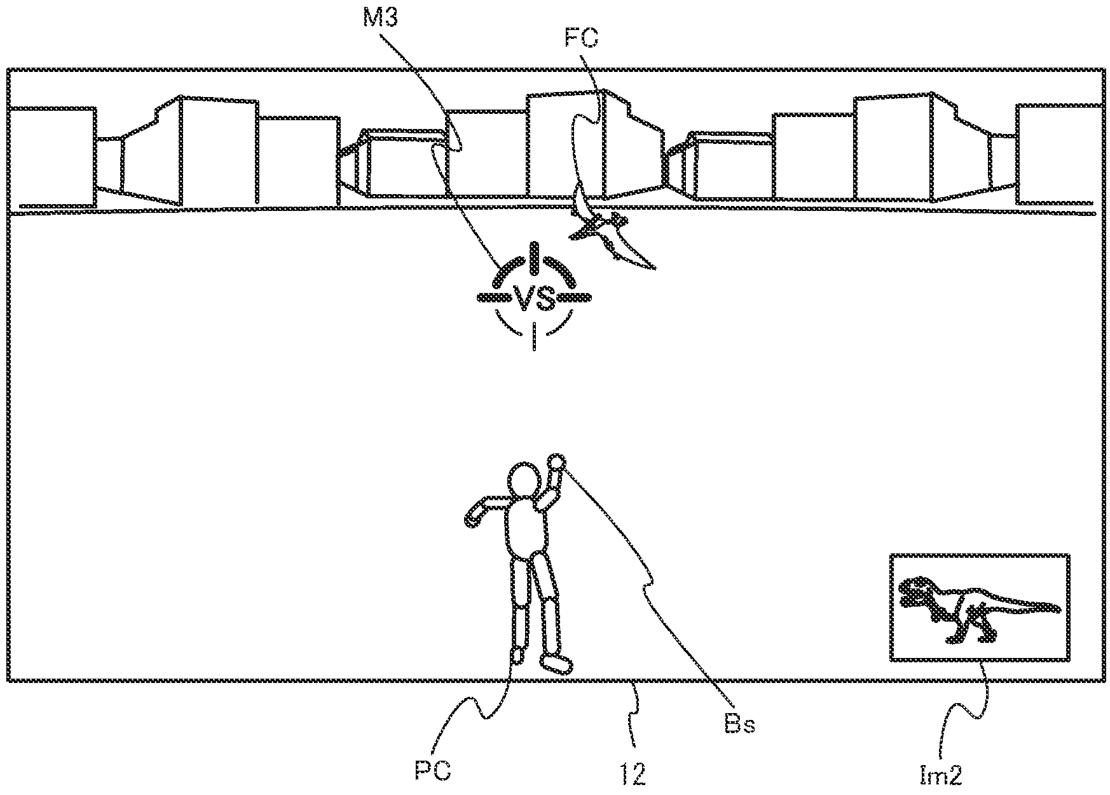


FIG. 13

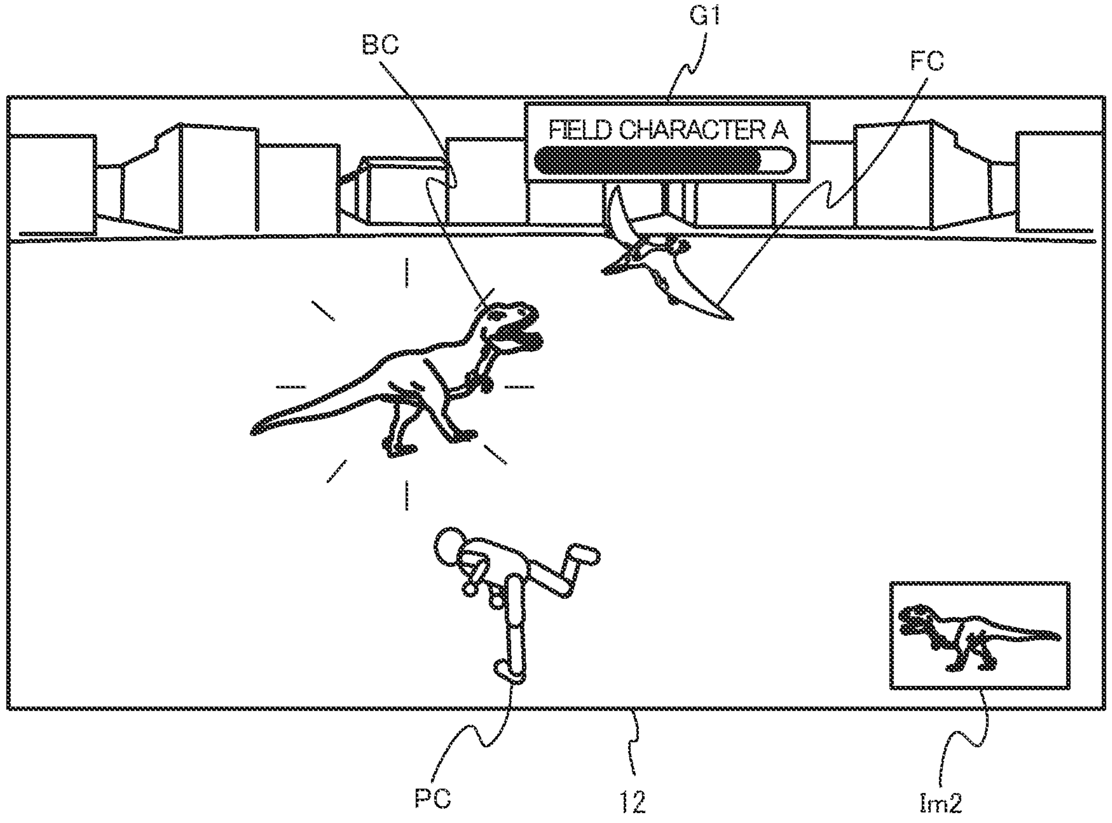
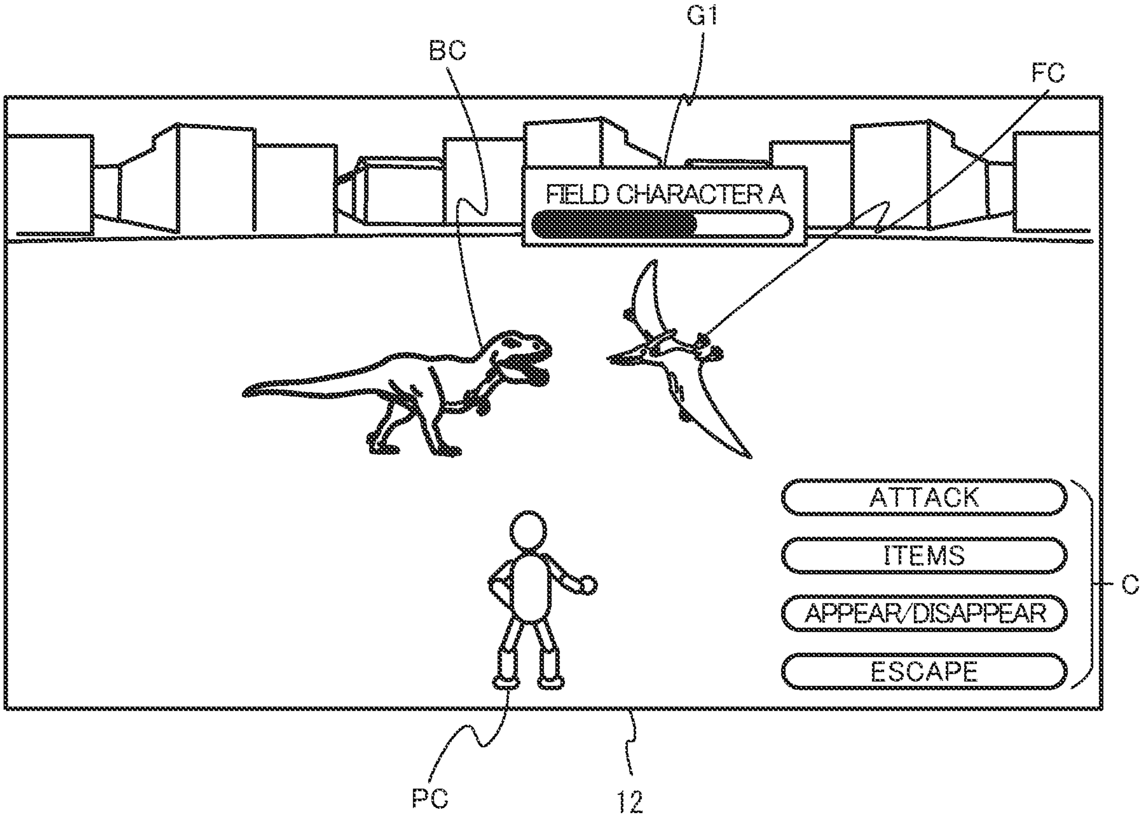


FIG. 14


G1
BC
FC
FIELD CHARACTER A
ATTACK
ITEMS
APPEAR/DISAPPEAR
ESCAPE
C
PC
12

F I G. 1 5

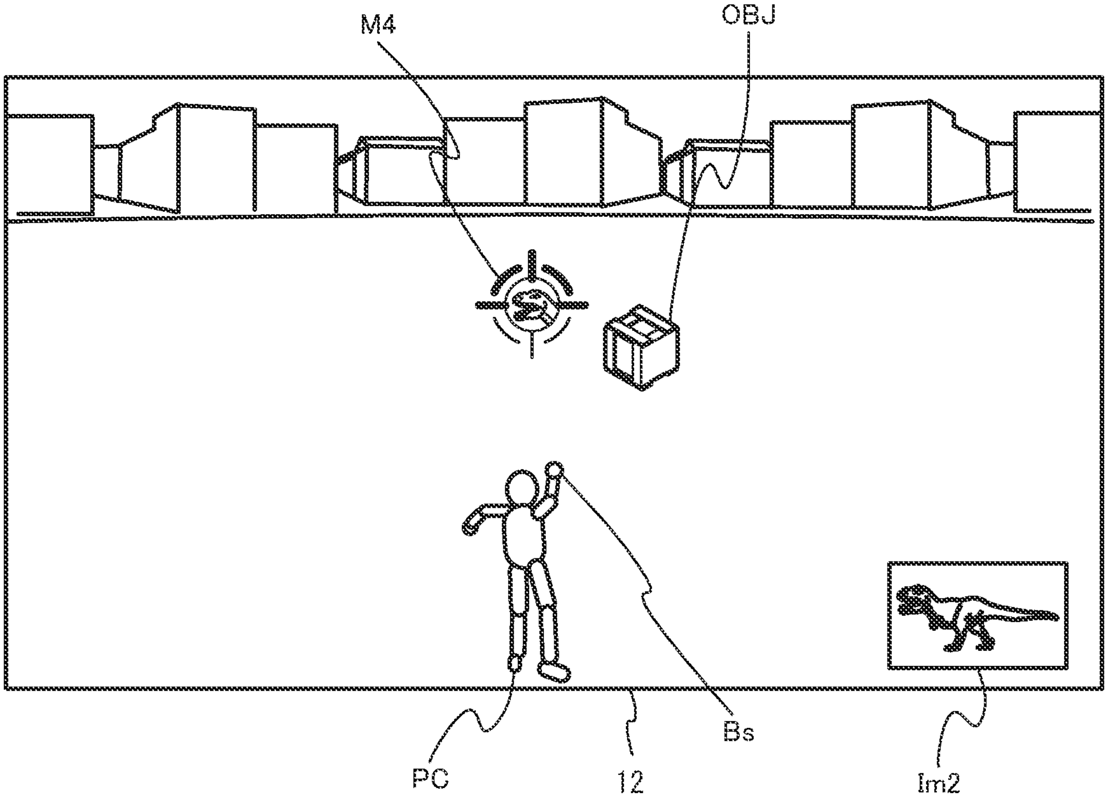
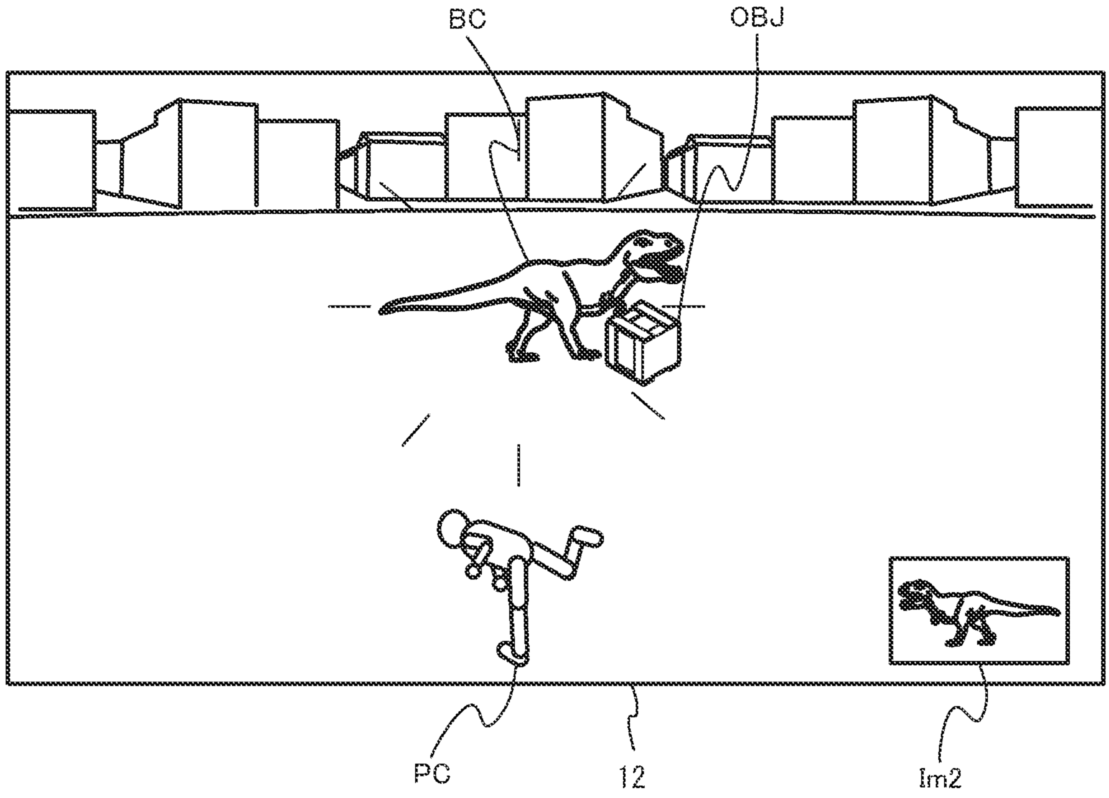
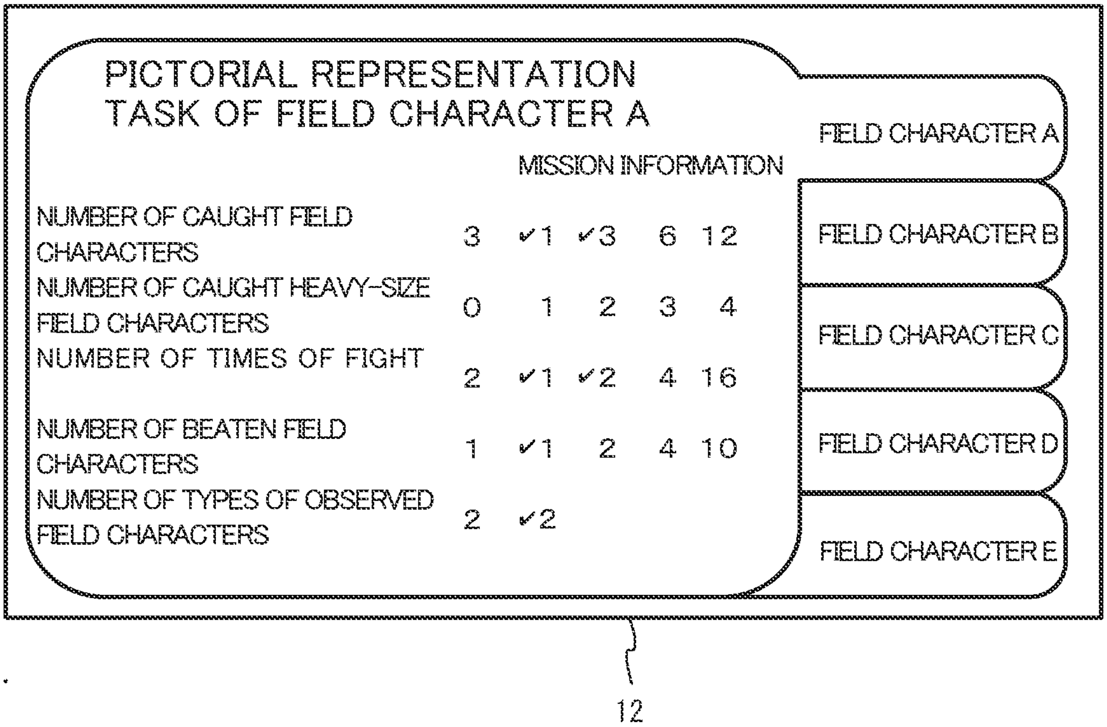


FIG. 16



F I G. 1 7



PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION
TASK OF FIELD CHARACTER A

| | | MISSION INFORMATION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NUMBER OF CAUGHT FIELD CHARACTERS | 3 | ✓1 | ✓3 | 6 | 12 |
| NUMBER OF CAUGHT HEAVY-SIZE FIELD CHARACTERS | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| NUMBER OF TIMES OF FIGHT | 2 | ✓1 | ✓2 | 4 | 16 |
| NUMBER OF BEATEN FIELD CHARACTERS | 1 | ✓1 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| NUMBER OF TYPES OF OBSERVED FIELD CHARACTERS | 2 | ✓2 | | | |

FIG. 18

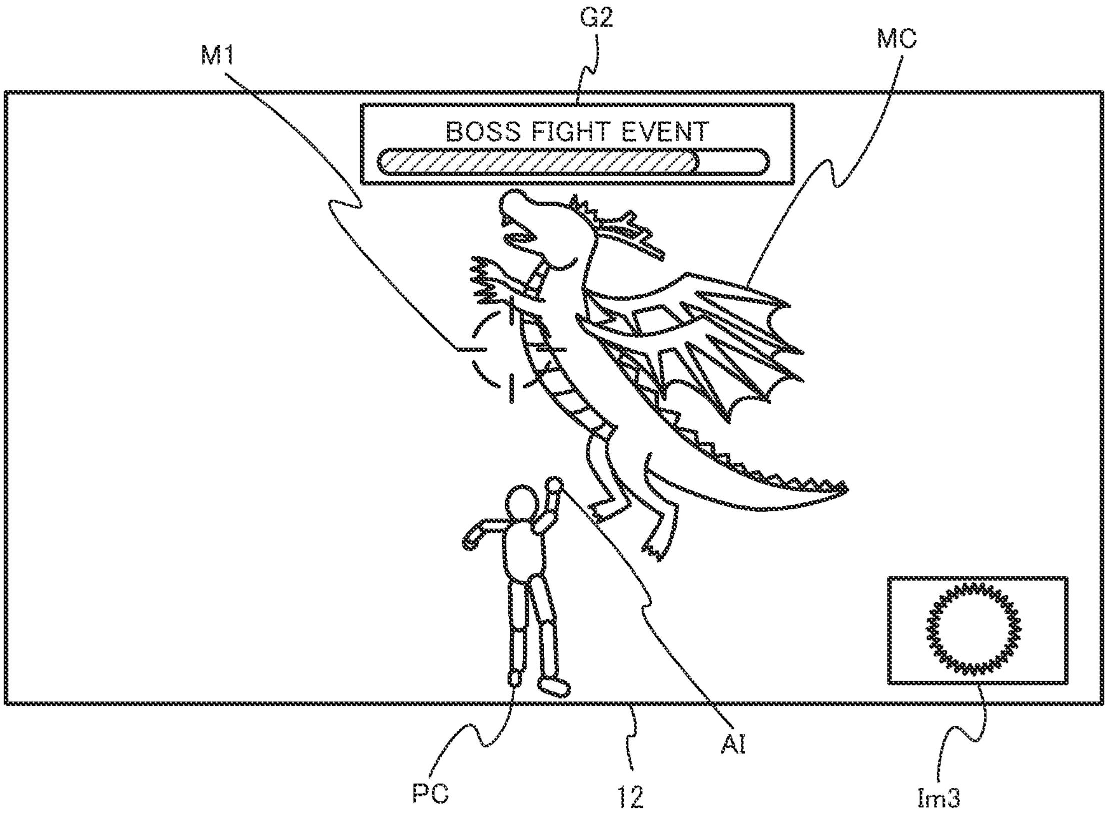


FIG. 19

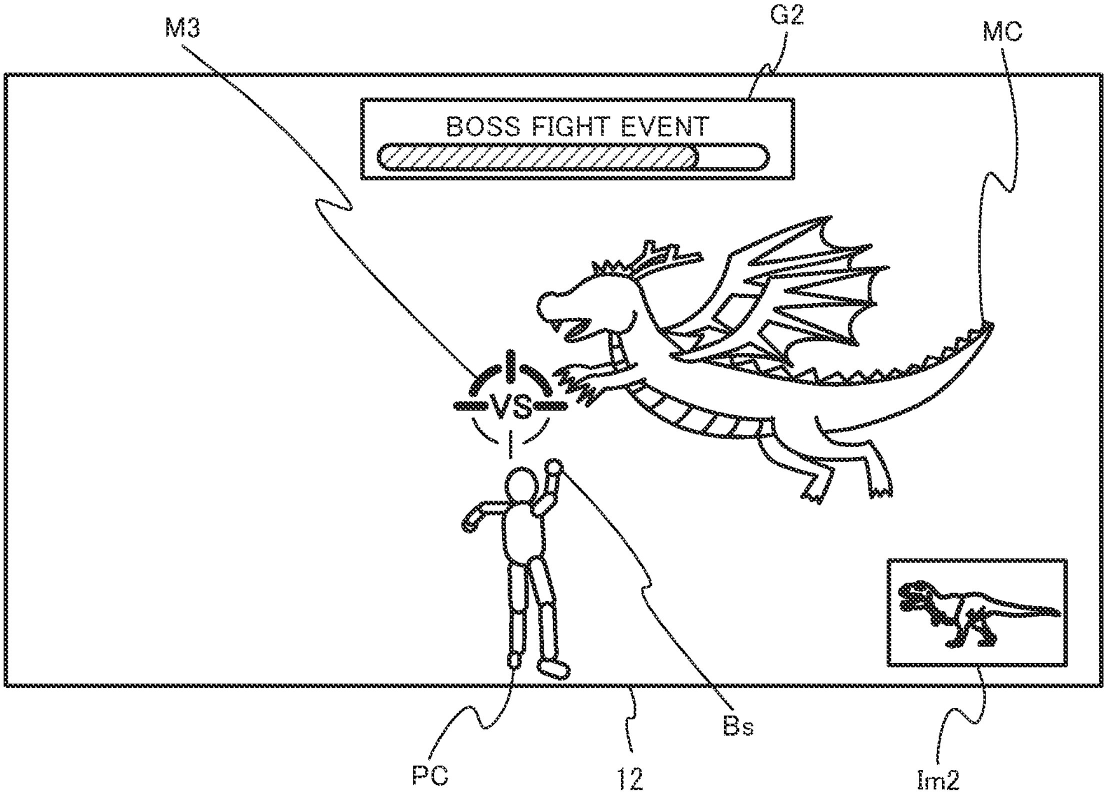


FIG. 20

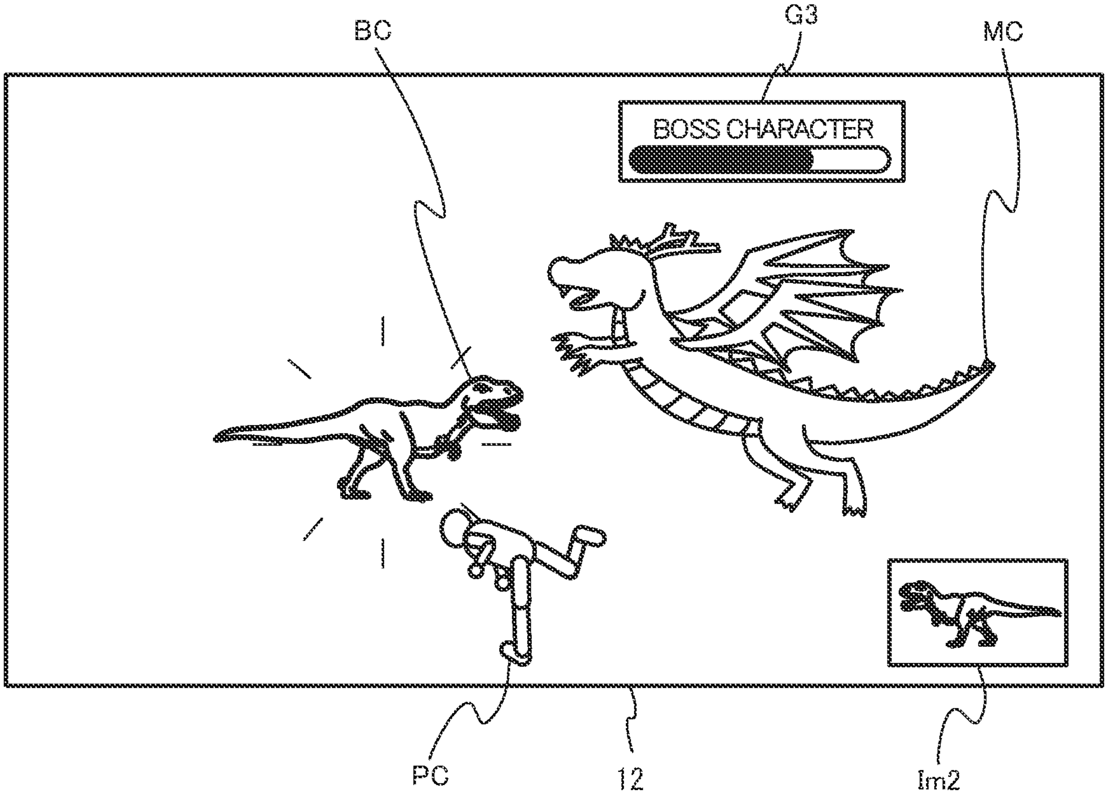


FIG. 21

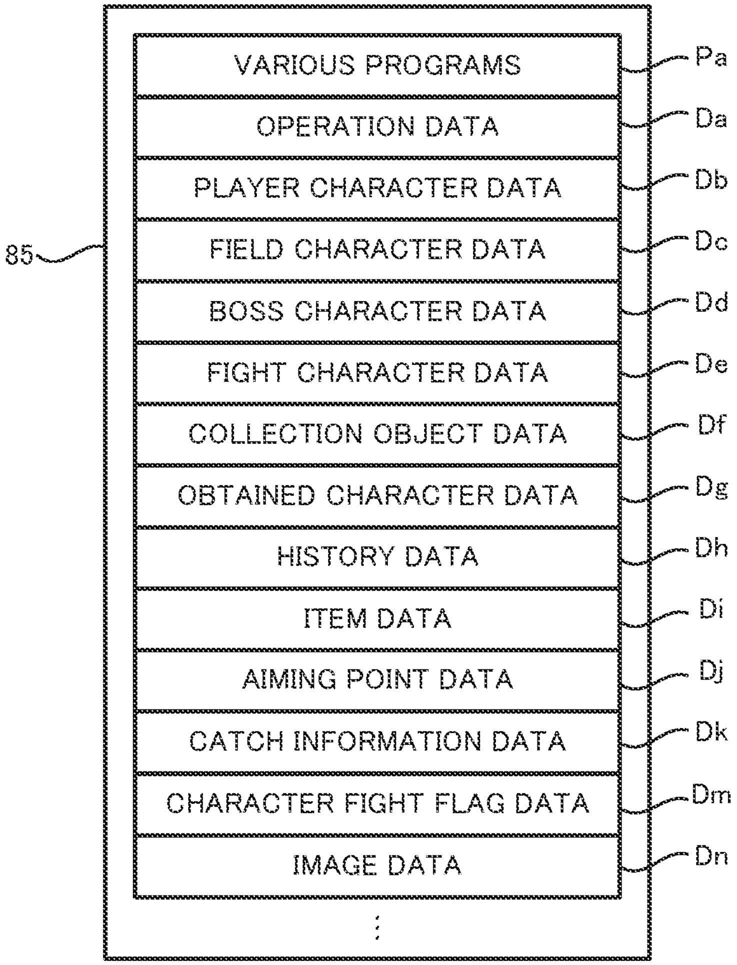

VARIOUS PROGRAMS
Pa
OPERATION DATA
Da
PLAYER CHARACTER DATA
Db
85
FIELD CHARACTER DATA
Dc
BOSS CHARACTER DATA
Dd
FIGHT CHARACTER DATA
De
COLLECTION OBJECT DATA
Df
OBTAINED CHARACTER DATA
Dg
HISTORY DATA
Dh
ITEM DATA
Di
AIMING POINT DATA
Dj
CATCH INFORMATION DATA
Dk
CHARACTER FIGHT FLAG DATA
Dm
IMAGE DATA
Dn
⋮

FIG. 22

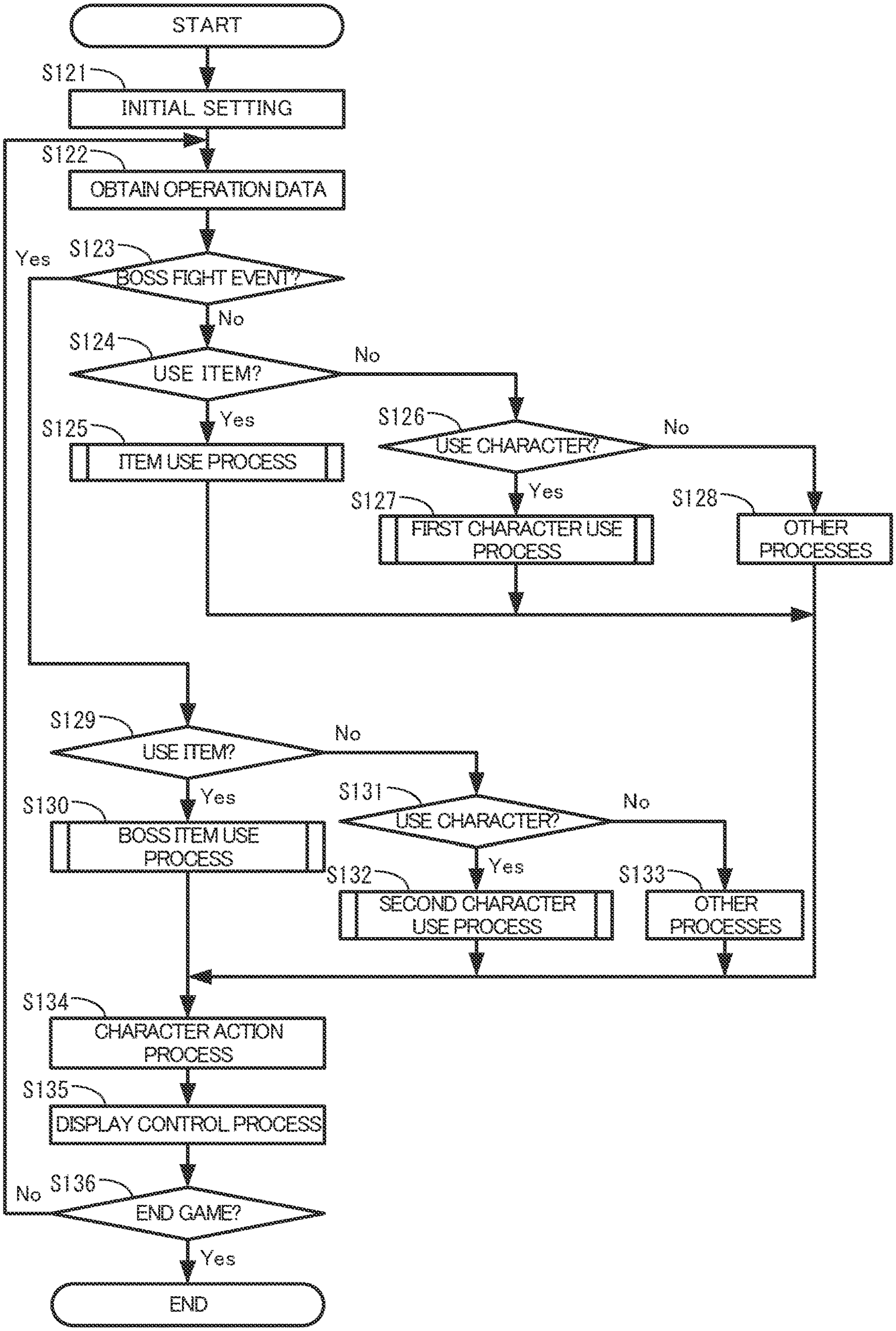

START
S121
INITIAL SETTING
S122
OBTAIN OPERATION DATA
S123
BOSS FIGHT EVENT?
Yes
No
S124
USE ITEM?
No
Yes
S125
ITEM USE PROCESS
S126
USE CHARACTER?
No
Yes
S127
FIRST CHARACTER USE PROCESS
S128
OTHER PROCESSES
S129
USE ITEM?
No
Yes
S130
BOSS ITEM USE PROCESS
S131
USE CHARACTER?
No
Yes
S132
SECOND CHARACTER USE PROCESS
S133
OTHER PROCESSES
S134
CHARACTER ACTION PROCESS
S135
DISPLAY CONTROL PROCESS
S136
END GAME?
No
Yes
END

FIG. 23

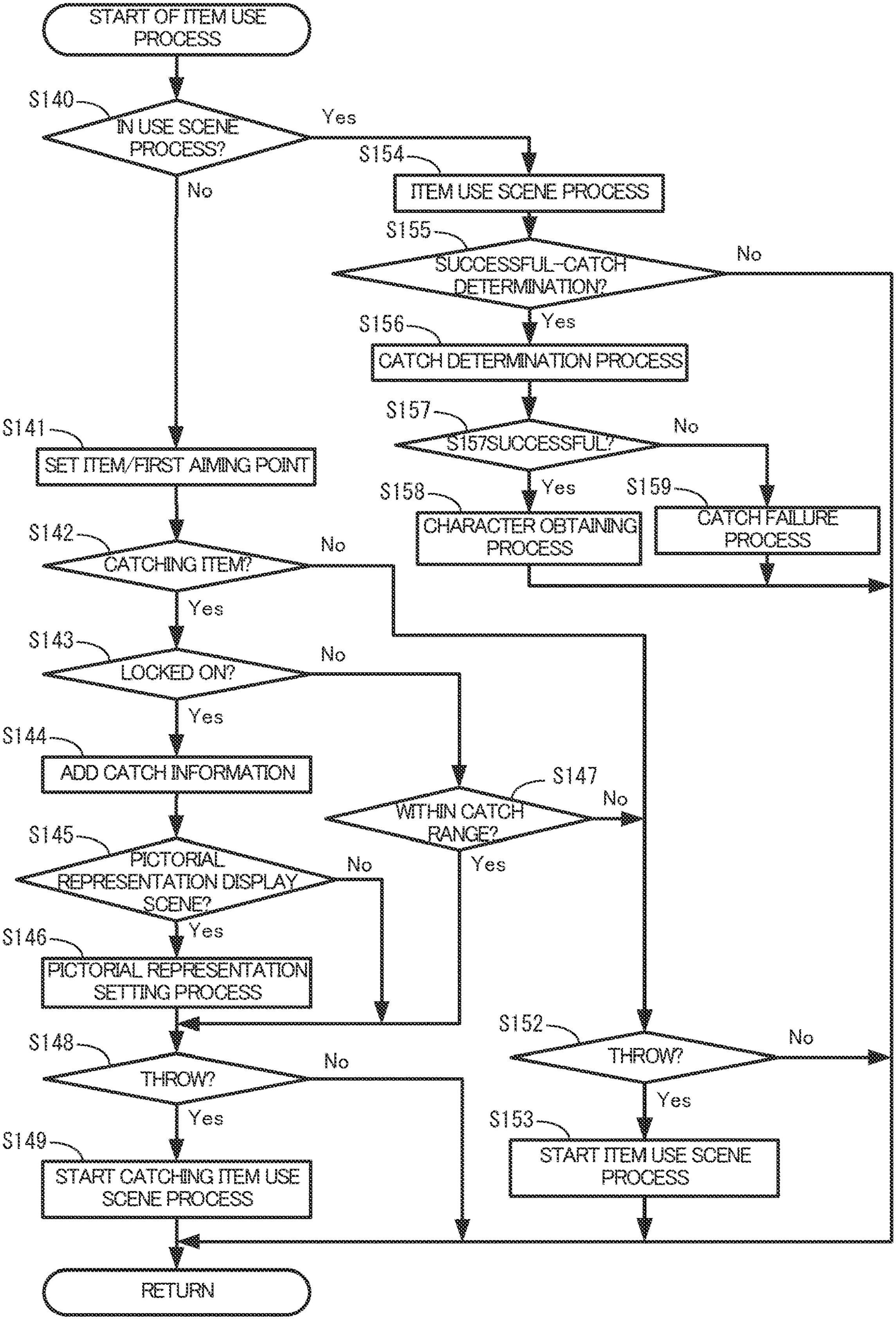

START OF ITEM USE PROCESS
S140
IN USE SCENE PROCESS?
Yes
No
S154
ITEM USE SCENE PROCESS
S155
SUCCESSFUL-CATCH DETERMINATION?
No
Yes
S156
CATCH DETERMINATION PROCESS
S157
S157SUCCESSFUL?
No
Yes
S158
CHARACTER OBTAINING PROCESS
S159
CATCH FAILURE PROCESS
S141
SET ITEM/FIRST AIMING POINT
S142
CATCHING ITEM?
No
Yes
S143
LOCKED ON?
No
Yes
S144
ADD CATCH INFORMATION
S147
WITHIN CATCH RANGE?
No
Yes
S145
PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION DISPLAY SCENE?
No
Yes
S146
PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION SETTING PROCESS
S152
THROW?
No
Yes
S153
START ITEM USE SCENE PROCESS
S148
THROW?
No
Yes
S149
START CATCHING ITEM USE SCENE PROCESS
RETURN

FIG. 24

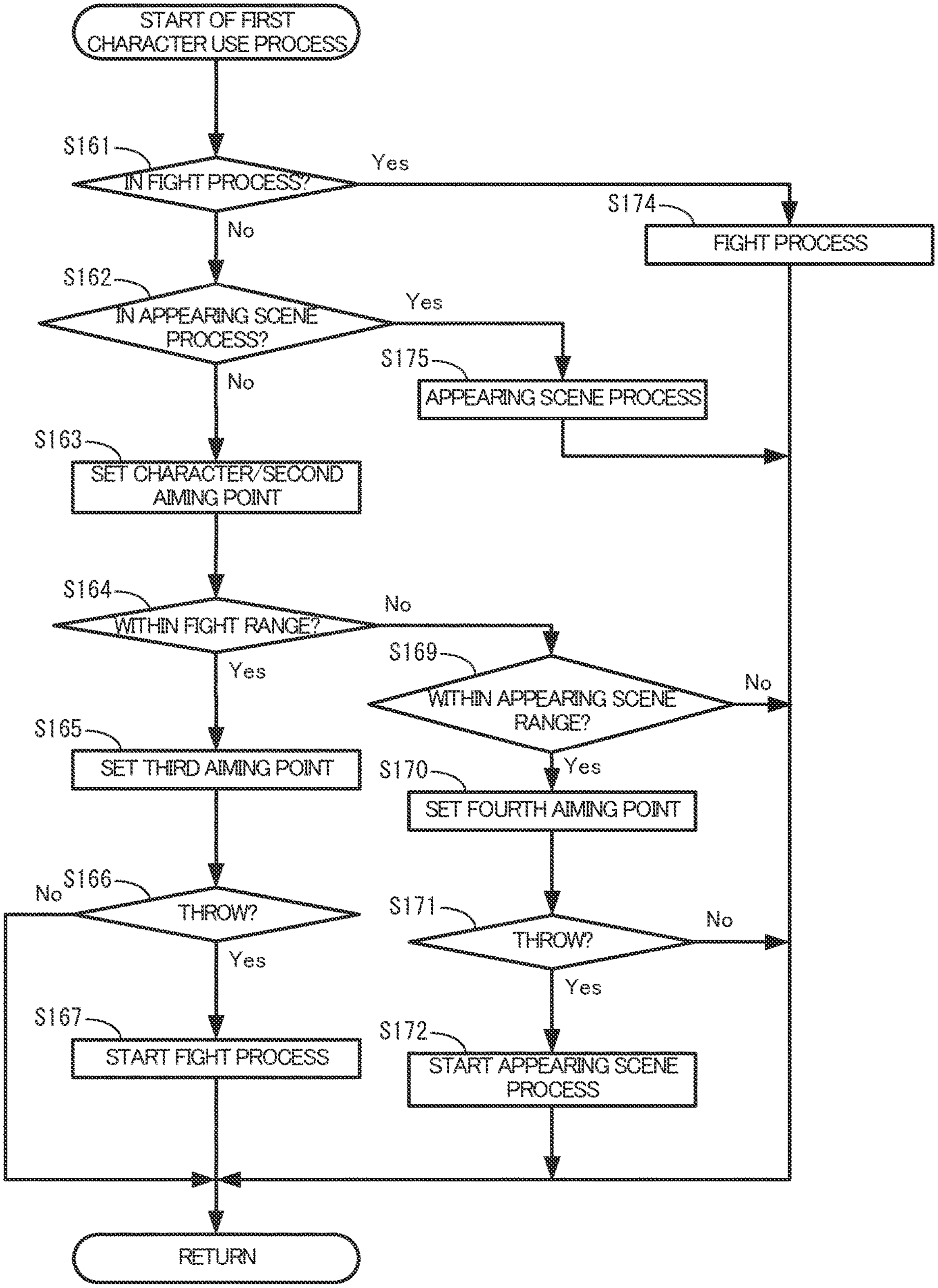

START OF FIRST CHARACTER USE PROCESS
S161
IN FIGHT PROCESS?
Yes
No
S174
FIGHT PROCESS
S162
IN APPEARING SCENE PROCESS?
Yes
No
S175
APPEARING SCENE PROCESS
S163
SET CHARACTER/SECOND AIMING POINT
S164
WITHIN FIGHT RANGE?
No
Yes
S169
WITHIN APPEARING SCENE RANGE?
No
Yes
S165
SET THIRD AIMING POINT
S170
SET FOURTH AIMING POINT
S166
THROW?
No
Yes
S171
THROW?
No
Yes
S167
START FIGHT PROCESS
S172
START APPEARING SCENE PROCESS
RETURN

FIG. 25

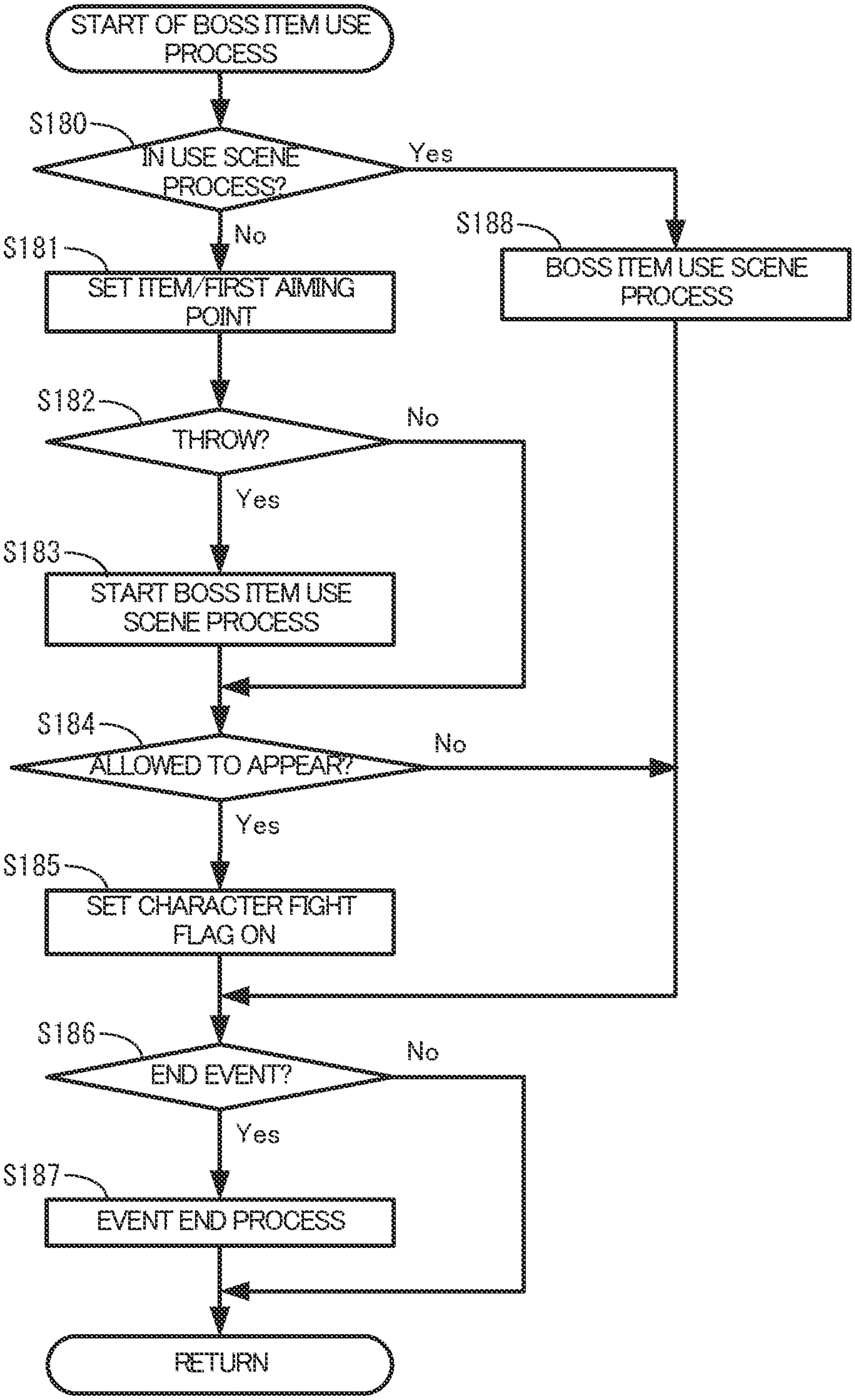
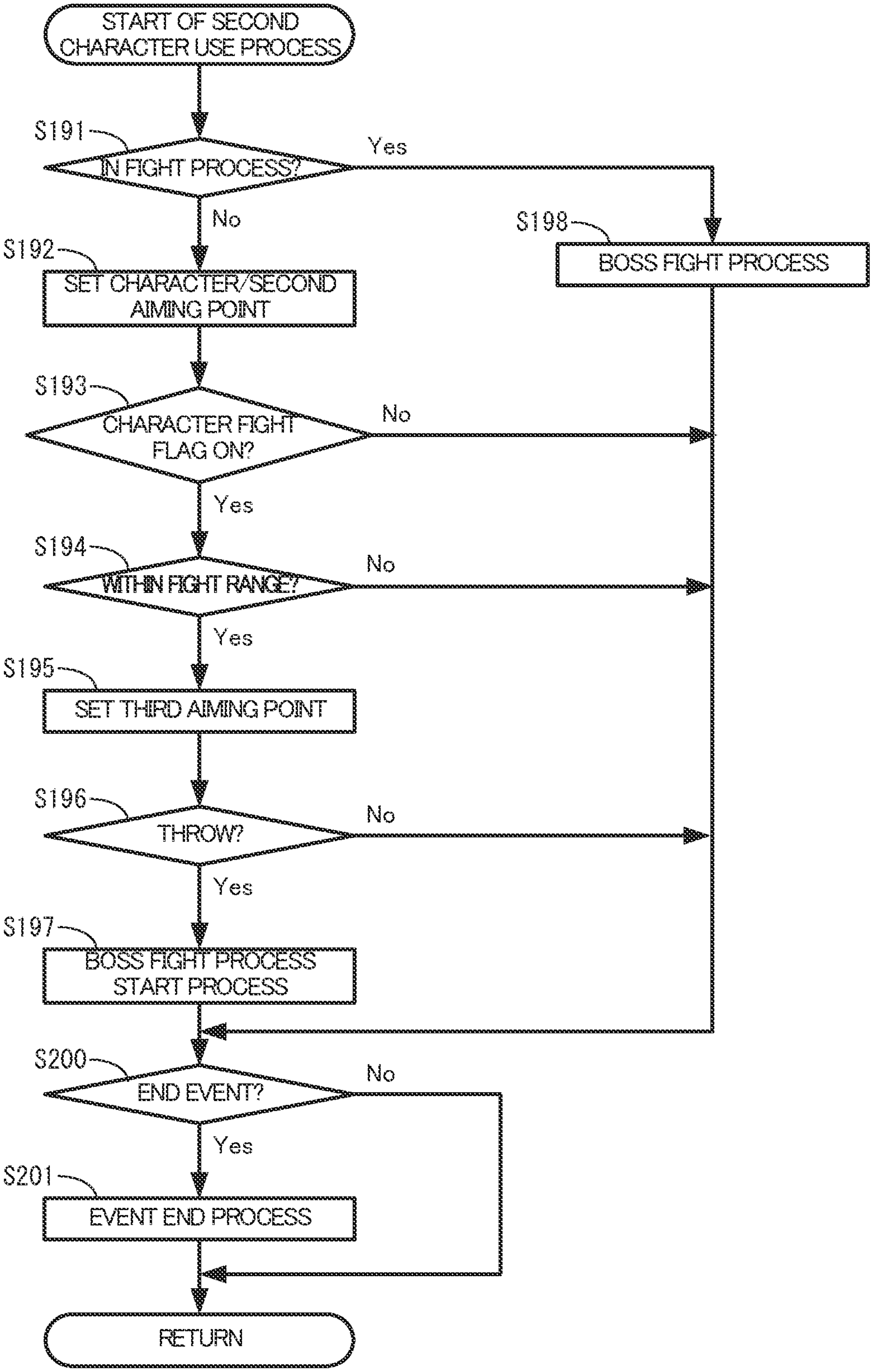

START OF BOSS ITEM USE PROCESS
S180
IN USE SCENE PROCESS?
Yes
No
S188
BOSS ITEM USE SCENE PROCESS
S181
SET ITEM/FIRST AIMING POINT
S182
THROW?
No
Yes
S183
START BOSS ITEM USE SCENE PROCESS
S184
ALLOWED TO APPEAR?
No
Yes
S185
SET CHARACTER FIGHT FLAG ON
S186
END EVENT?
No
Yes
S187
EVENT END PROCESS
RETURN

FIG. 26


START OF SECOND CHARACTER USE PROCESS
S191
IN FIGHT PROCESS?
Yes
No
S192
SET CHARACTER/SECOND AIMING POINT
S198
BOSS FIGHT PROCESS
S193
CHARACTER FIGHT FLAG ON?
No
Yes
S194
WITHIN FIGHT RANGE?
No
Yes
S195
SET THIRD AIMING POINT
S196
THROW?
No
Yes
S197
BOSS FIGHT PROCESS START PROCESS
S200
END EVENT?
No
Yes
S201
EVENT END PROCESS
RETURN

# STORAGE MEDIUM STORING GAME PROGRAM, GAME SYSTEM, GAME APPARATUS, AND GAME PROCESSING METHOD

## CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/652,874, filed May 2, 2024, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/949,666, filed on Sep. 21, 2022. This application also claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2021-208275, filed on Dec. 22, 2021. The entire contents of all disclosures are incorporated herein by reference.

## FIELD

The technology disclosed herein relates to game program-storing media, game systems, game apparatuses, and game processing methods that execute a process on a character in a virtual space.

## BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

There has conventionally been a game program that allows a player character to catch a character in a virtual space and possess the character.

However, the above game program allows a player character to catch a character only during a fight, and does not allow a player character to catch a character on a field.

With the above in mind, it is an object of the present non-limiting example to provide a game program-storing medium, game system, game apparatus, and game processing method that are capable of allowing a player character to perform a variety of actions on a field in a virtual space.

To achieve the object, the present non-limiting example may have the following features, for example.

A non-limiting example of a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored therein a game program of the present non-limiting example is executed by a computer of an information processing apparatus. The game program causes the computer to perform operations comprising: switching between at least a first and a second mode, based on a first operation input; and in the first mode, determining an aiming direction in a virtual space, based on a second operation input, and causing a player character to launch, in the aiming direction, an item that affects a field character disposed on a field in the virtual space, based on a third operation input, and when the item is launched at a place where the field character is disposed, giving an effect associated with the item to the field character, and in the second mode, determining the aiming direction, based on the second operation input, and causing the player character to launch, in the aiming direction, a fighting character that fights, based on the third operation input, and when the fighting character is launched at a place where the field character is disposed, causing the field character and the fighting character to start fighting against each other on the field.

Thus, by switching between the first mode and the second mode, the player character can be caused to perform different actions, i.e., an action of launching, at a field character as a target on a field, an item that affects the field character, and an action of launching a fighting character that fights against a field character on a field, according to an operation input for causing the player character to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point.

The item may include at least a catching item for catching the field character. The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: when the catching item launched in the first mode hits the field character, performing successful-catch determination relating to whether or not the catching is successful; and when the result of the successful-catch determination is positive, setting the field character hit by the catching item in a player's possession.

Thus, the user can choose whether to catch a field character or cause a fighting character to fight against a field character.

The item may further include an item having the effect of causing the result of the successful-catch determination to be more likely to be positive.

Thus, before a catching item is launched, successful-catch determination involved with the use of the catching item can be made more likely to be positive.

The item may further include an item having the effect of setting a limitation on a movement of the field character on the field.

Thus, by setting a limitation on a movement of a field character as a target on a field, a catching item is more likely to hit the field character.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: aligning the aiming direction with the field character, based on a fourth operation input.

Thus, the aiming direction can be easily aligned with a field character as a target on a field.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: displaying an indicator indicating how likely the result of the successful-catch determination is to be positive for a field character with which the aiming direction is aligned, based on the fourth operation input.

Thus, the indicator can be used in determination of whether or not to perform catching using a catching item. While the aiming direction is aligned with a field character, the indicator is displayed. Therefore, a catching item can be launched after the determination has been done.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: displaying information about a field character with which the aiming direction is aligned, based on the fourth operation input and a fifth operation input.

Thus, information about a field character as a target on a field can be easily viewed.

The information about the field character may include mission information about a history of an in-game mission including at least the number of the caught field characters and the number of times of a fight against the field character.

Thus, the history of missions is displayed for a field character as a target on a field, and can be used in determination of whether to choose the catch or the fight.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: causing the fighting character and the field character to fight against each other on the field, based on an operation input including at least an instruction to attack by the fighting character and an instruction to use an item, after start of the fight; when an instruction to use the catching item is issued during the fight, performing successful-catch determination of whether or not the field character is successfully caught using the catching item, based on a state of the field character that is changed due to the fight; and when the result of the successful-catch determination is positive during the fight, setting the field character in a player's possession.

Thus, it is possible to choose whether to catch a field character during a period of time other than a fight using a fighting character or catch a field character during the fight.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: in the fight, displaying an indicator indicating a state of the field character related to at least physical strength, at a location that is set, corresponding to a location of the field character, and controlling an orientation of a virtual camera, based on a sixth operation input.

Thus, even when an indicator indicating the physical strength of a field character is not displayed, the orientation of a virtual camera can be changed by an operation input. Therefore, the indicator can be displayed when desired by the user.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: in the second mode, when the fighting character is launched at a place where a collection object indicating that an item is allowed to be obtained is disposed on the field, causing the fighting character to perform an action with respect to the collection object, and setting the item associated with the collection object in a player's possession.

Thus, a fighting character can be used in other situations in addition to a fight against a field character.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: displaying a mark indicating the aiming direction in a display form that differs between the first mode and the second mode.

Thus, what is to be thrown by the player character can be easily recognized even while aligning the aiming point with a field character.

The item may be an event item that causes progression of an in-game event by hitting the field character. The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: in the in-game event, when a plurality of the event items have hit the field character until a clear condition is satisfied, determining that the in-game event is cleared, and when the fight against the field character is won, causing the clear condition to be easier to satisfy.

Thus, by switching between the first mode in which an item that affects a field character is launched and the second mode in which a fighting character that fights against a field character on a field is launched, various strategic aspects for clearing an in-game event can be provided.

The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: when the fight against the field character is won, setting a limitation on a movement of the field character in the virtual space during at least a period of time.

Thus, when a fighting character wins a fight against a field character, an item is more likely to hit the field character. Therefore, an in-game event can be advantageously cleared by the fight instead of launching of an item.

The clear condition may be that an event parameter that is reduced each time the event item hits the field character is lower than or equal to a reference. The game program may further cause the computer to perform operations comprising: when the fight against the field character is won, relatively increasing a reduction amount of the event parameter corresponding to hitting by the event item during at least a period of time.

Thus, the effect of an item launched in an in-game event can be increased. Therefore, an in-game event can be more advantageously cleared by the fight instead of launching of an item.

The present non-limiting example may be implemented in the form of a game apparatus, game system, and game processing method.

According to the present non-limiting example, by switching between the first mode and the second mode, the player character can be caused to perform different actions, i.e., an action of launching, at a field character as a target on a field, an item that affects the field character, and an action of launching a fighting character that fights against a field character on a field, according to an operation input for causing the player character to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point.

These and other objects, features, aspects and advantages of the present exemplary embodiment will become more apparent from the following detailed description of the present exemplary embodiment when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a state where a left controller **3** and a right controller **4** are attached to a main body apparatus **2**,

FIG. **2** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a state where a left controller **3** and a right controller **4** are detached from a main body apparatus **2**,

FIG. **3** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of a main body apparatus **2**,

FIG. **4** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of a left controller **3**,

FIG. **5** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of a right controller **4**,

FIG. **6** is a block diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of an internal configuration of a main body apparatus **2**,

FIG. **7** is a block diagram illustrating examples of internal configurations of a main body apparatus **2**, a left controller **3**, and a right controller **4**,

FIG. **8** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of catching of a field character FC,

FIG. **9** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of catching of a field character FC,

FIG. **10** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a third stage of catching of a field character FC,

FIG. **11** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **12** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **13** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a third stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **14** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a fourth stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **15** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of collection of a collection object OBJ by a fighting character BC, FIG. **16** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of collection of a collection object OBJ by a fighting character BC,

FIG. **17** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a pictorial representation of a field character FC,

FIG. **18** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image of an attack on a boss character MC,

FIG. **19** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of a fight between a boss character MC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **20** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of a fight between a boss character MC and a fighting character BC,

FIG. **21** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a data area set in a DRAM **85** of a main body apparatus **2** in the present non-limiting example,

FIG. **22** is a flowchart illustrating a non-limiting example of a game process executed in a game system **1**,

FIG. **23** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of an item use process executed in step S**125** of FIG. **22**,

FIG. **24** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a first character use process executed in step S**127** of FIG. **22**,

FIG. **25** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a boss item use process executed in step S**130** of FIG. **22**, and

FIG. **26** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a second character use process executed in step S**132** of FIG. **22**.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NON-LIMITING EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

A game system according to the present non-limiting example will now be described. A non-limiting example of a game system **1** according to the present non-limiting example includes a main body apparatus (information processing apparatus serving as the main body of a game apparatus in the present non-limiting example) **2**, a left controller **3**, and a right controller **4**. The left controller **3** and the right controller **4** are attachable to and detachable from the main body apparatus **2**. That is, the user can attach the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** to the main body apparatus **2**, and use them as a unified apparatus. The user can also use the main body apparatus **2** and the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** separately from each other (see FIG. **2**). In the description that follows, a hardware configuration of the game system **1** of the present non-limiting example is described, and thereafter, the control of the game system **1** of the present non-limiting example is described.

FIG. **1** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of the state where the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** are attached to the main body apparatus **2**. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, each of the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** is attached to and unified with the main body apparatus **2**. The main body apparatus **2** is an apparatus for performing various processes (e.g., game processing) in the game system **1**. The main body apparatus **2** includes a display **12**. Each of the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** is an apparatus including operation sections with which a user provides inputs.

FIG. **2** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of the state where each of the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** is detached from the main body apparatus **2**. As illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** are attachable to and detachable from the main body apparatus **2**. It should be noted that hereinafter, the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** will occasionally be referred to collectively as a "controller."

FIG. **3** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of the main body apparatus **2**. As illustrated in FIG. **3**, the main body apparatus **2** includes an approximately plate-shaped housing **11**. In the present non-limiting example, a main surface (in other words, a surface on a front side, i.e., a surface on which the display **12** is provided) of the housing **11** has a generally rectangular shape.

It should be noted that the shape and the size of the housing **11** are optional. As a non-limiting example, the housing **11** may be of a portable size. Further, the main body apparatus **2** alone or the unified apparatus obtained by attaching the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** to the main body apparatus **2** may function as a mobile apparatus. The main body apparatus **2** or the unified apparatus may function as a handheld apparatus or a portable apparatus.

As illustrated in FIG. **3**, the main body apparatus **2** includes the display **12**, which is provided on the main surface of the housing **11**. The display **12** displays an image generated by the main body apparatus **2**. In the present non-limiting example, the display **12** is a liquid crystal display device (LCD). The display **12**, however, may be a display device of any suitable type.

In addition, the main body apparatus **2** includes a touch panel **13** on the screen of the display **12**. In the present non-limiting example, the touch panel **13** allows multi-touch input (e.g., a capacitive touch panel). It should be noted that the touch panel **13** may be of any suitable type, e.g., it allows single-touch input (e.g., a resistive touch panel).

The main body apparatus **2** includes a speaker (i.e., a speaker **88** illustrated in FIG. **6**) inside the housing **11**. As illustrated in FIG. **3**, speaker holes **11***a* and **11***b* are formed in the main surface of the housing **11**. The speaker **88** outputs sounds through the speaker holes **11***a* and **11***b*.

The main body apparatus **2** also includes a left-side terminal **17** that enables wired communication between the main body apparatus **2** and the left controller **3**, and a right-side terminal **21** that enables wired communication between the main body apparatus **2** and the right controller **4**.

As illustrated in FIG. **3**, the main body apparatus **2** includes a slot **23**. The slot **23** is provided on an upper side surface of the housing **11**. The slot **23** is so shaped as to allow a predetermined type of storage medium to be attached to the slot **23**. The predetermined type of storage medium is, for example, a dedicated storage medium (e.g., a dedicated memory card) for the game system **1** and an information processing apparatus of the same type as the game system **1**. The predetermined type of storage medium is used to store, for example, data (e.g., saved data of an application or the like) used by the main body apparatus **2** and/or a program (e.g., a program for an application or the like) executed by the main body apparatus **2**. Further, the main body apparatus **2** includes a power button **28**.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a lower-side terminal **27**. The lower-side terminal **27** allows the main body apparatus **2** to communicate with a cradle. In the present non-limiting example, the lower-side terminal **27** is a USB connector (more specifically, a female connector). When the unified apparatus or the main body apparatus **2** alone is placed on the cradle, the game system **1** can display, on a stationary monitor, an image that is generated and output by the main body apparatus **2**. Also, in the present non-limiting example, the cradle has the function of charging the unified apparatus or the main body apparatus **2** alone, being placed thereon. The cradle also functions as a hub device (specifically, a USB hub).

FIG. **4** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of the left controller **3**. As illustrated in FIG. **4**, the left controller **3** includes a housing **31**. In the present non-limiting example, the housing **31** has a vertically long shape, e.g., is shaped to be long in an up-down direction (i.e., a y-axis direction illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **4**). In the state where the left controller **3** is detached from the main body apparatus **2**, the left controller **3** can also be held in the orientation in which the left controller **3** is vertically long. The housing **31** has such a shape and a size that when held in the orientation in which the housing **31** is vertically long, the housing **31** can be held with one hand, particularly the left hand. Further, the left controller **3** can also be held in the orientation in which the left controller **3** is horizontally long. When held in the orientation in which the left controller **3** is horizontally long, the left controller **3** may be held with both hands.

The left controller **3** includes an analog stick **32**. As illustrated in FIG. **4**, the analog stick **32** is provided on a main surface of the housing **31**. The analog stick **32** can be used as a direction input section with which a direction can be input. The user tilts the analog stick **32** and thereby can input a direction corresponding to the direction of the tilt (and input a magnitude corresponding to the angle of the tilt). It should be noted that the left controller **3** may include a directional pad, a slide stick that allows a slide input, or the like as the direction input section, instead of the analog stick. Further, in the present non-limiting example, it is possible to provide an input by pressing the analog stick **32**.

The left controller **3** includes various operation buttons. The left controller **3** includes four operation buttons **33** to **36** (specifically, a right direction button **33**, a down direction button **34**, an up direction button **35**, and a left direction button **36**) on the main surface of the housing **31**. Further, the left controller **3** includes a record button **37** and a "−" (minus) button **47**. The left controller **3** includes a first L-button **38** and a ZL-button **39** in an upper left portion of a side surface of the housing **31**. Further, the left controller **3** includes a second L-button **43** and a second R-button **44**, on the side surface of the housing **31** on which the left controller **3** is attached to the main body apparatus **2**. These operation buttons are used to give instructions depending on various programs (e.g., an OS program and an application program) executed by the main body apparatus **2**.

The left controller **3** also includes a terminal **42** that enables wired communication between the left controller **3** and the main body apparatus **2**.

FIG. **5** illustrates six orthogonal views of a non-limiting example of the right controller **4**. As illustrated in FIG. **5**, the right controller **4** includes a housing **51**. In the present non-limiting example, the housing **51** has a vertically long shape, e.g., is shaped to be long in the up-down direction. In the state where the right controller **4** is detached from the main body apparatus **2**, the right controller **4** can also be held in the orientation in which the right controller **4** is vertically long. The housing **51** has such a shape and a size that when held in the orientation in which the housing **51** is vertically long, the housing **51** can be held with one hand, particularly the right hand. Further, the right controller **4** can also be held in the orientation in which the right controller **4** is horizontally long. When held in the orientation in which the right controller **4** is horizontally long, the right controller **4** may be held with both hands.

Similarly to the left controller **3**, the right controller **4** includes an analog stick **52** as a direction input section. In the present non-limiting example, the analog stick **52** has the same configuration as that of the analog stick **32** of the left controller **3**. Further, the right controller **4** may include a directional pad, a slide stick that allows a slide input, or the like, instead of the analog stick. Further, similarly to the left controller **3**, the right controller **4** includes four operation buttons **53** to **56** (specifically, an A-button **53**, a B-button **54**, an X-button **55**, and a Y-button **56**) on a main surface of the housing **51**. Further, the right controller **4** includes a "+" (plus) button **57** and a home button **58**. Further, the right controller **4** includes a first R-button **60** and a ZR-button **61** in an upper right portion of a side surface of the housing **51**. Further, similarly to the left controller **3**, the right controller **4** includes a second L-button **65** and a second R-button **66**.

Further, the right controller **4** includes a terminal **64** for allowing the right controller **4** to perform wired communication with the main body apparatus **2**.

FIG. **6** is a block diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of an internal configuration of the main body apparatus **2**. The main body apparatus **2** includes components **81** to **91**, **97**, and **98** illustrated in FIG. **6** in addition to the components illustrated in FIG. **3**. Some of the components **81** to **91**, **97**, and **98** may be implemented as electronic parts on an electronic circuit board, which is contained in the housing **11**.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a processor **81**. The processor **81** is an information processor for executing various types of information processing to be executed by the main body apparatus **2**. For example, the CPU **81** may include only a central processing unit (CPU), or may be a system-on-a-chip (SoC) having a plurality of functions such as a CPU function and a graphics processing unit (GPU) function. The processor **81** executes an information processing program (e.g., a game program) stored in a storage section (specifically, an internal storage medium such as a flash memory **84**, an external storage medium that is attached to the slot **23**, or the like), thereby executing the various types of information processing.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a flash memory **84** and a dynamic random access memory (DRAM) **85** as examples of internal storage media built in itself. The flash memory **84** and the DRAM **85** are connected to the CPU **81**. The flash memory **84** is mainly used to store various data (or programs) to be saved in the main body apparatus **2**. The DRAM **85** is used to temporarily store various data used in information processing.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a slot interface (hereinafter abbreviated to "I/F") **91**. The slot I/F **91** is connected to the processor **81**. The slot I/F **91** is connected to the slot **23**, and reads and writes data from and to a predetermined type of storage medium (e.g., a dedicated memory card) attached to the slot **23**, in accordance with commands from the processor **81**.

The processor **81** reads and writes, as appropriate, data from and to the flash memory **84**, the DRAM **85**, and each of the above storage media, thereby executing the above information processing.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a network communication section **82**. The network communication section **82** is connected to the processor **81**. The network communication section **82** communicates (specifically, through wireless communication) with an external apparatus via a network. In the present non-limiting example, as a first communication form, the network communication section **82** connects to a wireless LAN and communicates with an external apparatus, using a method compliant with the Wi-Fi standard. Further, as a second communication form, the network communication section **82** wirelessly communicates with another main body apparatus **2** of the same type, using a predetermined communication method (e.g., communication based on a particular protocol or infrared light communication). It should be noted that the wireless communication in the above second communication form achieves the function of allowing so-called "local communication," in which the main body apparatus **2** can wirelessly communicate with another main body apparatus **2** located in a closed local network area, and the plurality of main body apparatuses **2** directly communicate with each other to exchange data.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a controller communication section **83**. The controller communication section **83** is connected to the processor **81**. The controller communication section **83** wirelessly communicates with the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4**. The main body apparatus **2** may communicate with the left and right controllers **3** and **4** using any suitable communication method. In the present non-limiting example, the controller communication section **83** performs communication with the left and right controllers **3** and **4** in accordance with the Bluetooth (registered trademark) standard.

The processor **81** is connected to the left-side terminal **17**, the right-side terminal **21**, and the lower-side terminal **27**. When performing wired communication with the left controller **3**, the processor **81** transmits data to the left controller **3** via the left-side terminal **17** and also receives operation data from the left controller **3** via the left-side terminal **17**. Further, when performing wired communication with the right controller **4**, the processor **81** transmits data to the right controller **4** via the right-side terminal **21** and also receives operation data from the right controller **4** via the right-side terminal **21**. Further, when communicating with the cradle, the processor **81** transmits data to the cradle via the lower-side terminal **27**. As described above, in the present non-limiting example, the main body apparatus **2** can perform both wired communication and wireless communication with each of the left and right controllers **3** and **4**. Further, when the unified apparatus obtained by attaching the left and right controllers **3** and **4** to the main body apparatus **2** or the main body apparatus **2** alone is attached to the cradle, the main body apparatus **2** can output data (e.g., image data or sound data) to a stationary monitor or the like via the cradle.

Here, the main body apparatus **2** can communicate with a plurality of left controllers **3** simultaneously (or in parallel). Further, the main body apparatus **2** can communicate with a plurality of right controllers **4** simultaneously (or in parallel). Thus, a plurality of users can simultaneously provide inputs to the main body apparatus **2**, each using a set of left and right controllers **3** and **4**. As a non-limiting example, a first user can provide an input to the main body apparatus **2** using a first set of left and right controllers **3** and **4**, and at the same time, a second user can provide an input to the main body apparatus **2** using a second set of left and right controllers **3** and **4**.

Further, the display **12** is connected to the processor **81**. The processor **81** displays, on the display **12**, a generated image (e.g., an image generated by executing the above information processing) and/or an externally obtained image.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a codec circuit **87** and speakers (specifically, a left speaker and a right speaker) **88**. The codec circuit **87** is connected to the speakers **88** and an audio input/output terminal **25** and also connected to the processor **81**. The codec circuit **87** is for controlling the input and output of audio data to and from the speakers **88** and the sound input/output terminal **25**.

Further, the main body apparatus **2** includes an acceleration sensor **89**. In the present non-limiting example, the acceleration sensor **89** detects the magnitudes of accelerations along predetermined three axial (e.g., the x-, y-, and z-axes shown in FIG. **1**) directions. It should be noted that the acceleration sensor **89** may detect an acceleration along one axial direction or accelerations along two axial directions.

Further, the main body apparatus **2** includes an angular velocity sensor **90**. In the present non-limiting example, the angular velocity sensor **90** detects angular velocities about predetermined three axes (e.g., the x-, y-, and z-axes shown in FIG. **1**). It should be noted that the angular velocity sensor **90** may detect an angular velocity about one axis or angular velocities about two axes.

The acceleration sensor **89** and the angular velocity sensor **90** are connected to the processor **81**. The detection results of the acceleration sensor **89** and the angular velocity sensor **90** are output to the processor **81**. Based on the detection results of the acceleration sensor **89** and the angular velocity sensor **90**, the processor **81** can calculate information about a motion and/or orientation of the main body apparatus **2**.

The main body apparatus **2** includes a power control section **97** and a battery **98**. The power control section **97** is connected to the battery **98** and the processor **81**. Further, although not illustrated, the power control section **97** is connected to components of the main body apparatus **2** (specifically, components that receive power supplied from the battery **98**, the left-side terminal **17**, and the right-side terminal **21**). Based on a command from the processor **81**, the power control section **97** controls the supply of power from the battery **98** to each of the above components.

Further, the battery **98** is connected to the lower-side terminal **27**. When an external charging device (e.g., the cradle) is connected to the lower-side terminal **27**, and power is supplied to the main body apparatus **2** via the lower-side terminal **27**, the battery **98** is charged with the supplied power.

FIG. **7** is a block diagram illustrating non-limiting examples of the internal configurations of the main body apparatus **2**, the left controller **3**, and the right controller **4**. It should be noted that the details of the internal configuration of the main body apparatus **2** are illustrated in FIG. **6** and therefore are omitted in FIG. **7**.

The left controller **3** includes a communication control section **101**, which communicates with the main body apparatus **2**. As illustrated in FIG. **7**, the communication control section **101** is connected to components including the terminal **42**. In the present non-limiting example, the communication control section **101** can communicate with the main body apparatus **2** through both wired communication via the terminal **42** and wireless communication without via the terminal **42**. The communication control section **101** controls the method for communication performed by the left controller **3** with the main body apparatus **2**. That is, when the left controller **3** is attached to the main body apparatus **2**, the communication control section **101** communicates with the main body apparatus **2** via the terminal **42**. Further, when the left controller **3** is detached from the main body apparatus **2**, the communication control section **101** wirelessly communicates with the main body apparatus **2** (specifically, the controller communication section **83**). The wireless communication between the communication control section **101** and the controller communication section **83** is performed in accordance with the Bluetooth (registered trademark) standard, for example.

Further, the left controller **3** includes a memory **102** such as a flash memory. The communication control section **101** includes, for example, a microcomputer (or a microprocessor) and executes firmware stored in the memory **102**, thereby performing various processes.

The left controller **3** includes buttons **103** (specifically, the buttons **33** to **39**, **43**, **44**, and **47**). Further, the left controller **3** includes the analog stick ("stick" in FIG. **7**) **32**. Each of the buttons **103** and the analog stick **32** outputs information regarding an operation performed on itself to the communication control section **101** repeatedly at appropriate timing.

The left controller **3** includes inertial sensors. Specifically, the left controller **3** includes an acceleration sensor **104**. Further, the left controller **3** includes an angular velocity sensor **105**. In the present non-limiting example, the acceleration sensor **104** detects the magnitudes of accelerations along predetermined three axial (e.g., the x-, y-, and z-axes shown in FIG. **4**) directions. It should be noted that the acceleration sensor **104** may detect an acceleration along one axial direction or accelerations along two axial directions. In the present non-limiting example, an angular velocity sensor **105** detects angular velocities about predetermined three axes (e.g., the x-, y-, and z-axes shown in FIG. **4**). It should be noted that the angular velocity sensor **105** may detect an angular velocity about one axis or angular velocities about two axes. Each of the acceleration sensor **104** and the angular velocity sensor **105** is connected to the communication control section **101**. Then, the detection results of the acceleration sensor **104** and the angular velocity sensor **105** are output to the communication control section **101** repeatedly at appropriate timing.

The communication control section **101** acquires information regarding an input (specifically, information regarding an operation or the detection result of the sensor) from each of input sections (specifically, the buttons **103** and the analog stick **32**). The communication control section **101** transmits operation data including the acquired information (or information obtained by performing predetermined processing on the acquired information) to the main body apparatus **2**. It should be noted that the operation data is transmitted repeatedly, once every predetermined time. It should be noted that the interval at which the information regarding an input is transmitted from each of the input sections to the main body apparatus **2** may or may not be the same.

The above operation data is transmitted to the main body apparatus **2**, whereby the main body apparatus **2** can obtain inputs provided to the left controller **3**. That is, the main body apparatus **2** can determine operations on the buttons **103** and the analog stick **32** based on the operation data. Further, the main body apparatus **2** can calculate information regarding the motion and/or the orientation of the left controller **3** based on the operation data (specifically, the detection results of the acceleration sensor **104** and the angular velocity sensor **105**).

The left controller **3** includes a power supply section **108**. In the present non-limiting example, the power supply section **108** includes a battery and a power control circuit. Although not illustrated in FIG. **7**, the power control circuit is connected to the battery and also connected to components of the left controller **3** (specifically, components that receive power supplied from the battery).

As illustrated in FIG. **7**, the right controller **4** includes a communication control section **111**, which communicates with the main body apparatus **2**. Further, the right controller **4** includes a memory **112**, which is connected to the communication control section **111**. The communication control section **111** is connected to components including the terminal **64**. The communication control section **111** and the memory **112** have functions similar to those of the communication control section **101** and the memory **102**, respectively, of the left controller **3**. Thus, a communication control section **111** can communicate with the main body apparatus **2** through both wired communication via the terminal **64** and wireless communication without via the terminal **64** (specifically, communication compliant with the Bluetooth (registered trademark) standard). The communication control section **111** controls the method for communication performed by the right controller **4** with the main body apparatus **2**.

The right controller **4** includes input sections similar to the input sections of the left controller **3**. Specifically, the right controller **4** includes buttons **113**, the analog stick **52**, and inertial sensors (an acceleration sensor **114** and an angular velocity sensor **115**). These input sections have functions similar to those of the input sections of the left controller **3** and operate similarly to the input sections of the left controller **3**.

The right controller **4** includes a power supply section **118**. The power supply section **118** has a function similar to that of the power supply section **108** of the left controller **3** and operates similarly to the power supply section **108**.

As described above, in the game system **1** of the present non-limiting example, the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** are removable from the main body apparatus **2**. In addition, when the unified apparatus obtained by attaching the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** to the main body apparatus **2** or the main body apparatus **2** alone is attached to the cradle, an image (and sound) can be output on an external display device, such as a stationary monitor or the like. The game system **1** will be described below according to a non-limiting embodiment in which an image is displayed on the display **12**. It should be noted that in the case where the game system **1** is used in an embodiment in which an image is displayed on the display **12**, the game system **1** may be used with the left controller **3** and the right controller **4** attached to the main body apparatus **2** (e.g., the main body apparatus **2**, the left controller **3**, and the right controller **4** are integrated in a single housing).

A game is played using a virtual space displayed on the display **12**, according to operations performed on the operation buttons and sticks of the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4**, or touch operations performed on the touch panel **13** of the main body apparatus **2**, in the game system **1**. In the present non-limiting example, as a non-limiting example, a game in which a player character PC and a field character FC, which perform an action on a field in the virtual space, and characters such as a fighting character BC that fights against the field character FC on the field, are employed, can be played according to the user's operation performed using the operation buttons, the sticks, and the touch panel **13**.

An overview of a game process executed in the game system **1** will be given with reference to FIGS. **8** to **20**. It should be noted that FIG. **8** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of catching of a field character FC. FIG. **9** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of catching of a field character FC. FIG. **10** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a third stage of catching of a field character FC.

FIG. **11** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC. FIG. **12** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC. FIG. **13** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a third stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC. FIG. **14** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a fourth stage of a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC. FIG. **15** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of collection of a collection object OBJ by a fighting character BC. FIG. **16** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of collection of a collection object OBJ by a fighting character BC. FIG. **17** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a pictorial representation of a field character FC. FIG. **18** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image of an attack on a boss character MC. FIG. **19** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a first stage of a fight between a boss character MC and a fighting character BC. FIG. **20** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a game image in a second stage of a fight between a boss character MC and a fighting character BC.

## First Non-Limiting Embodiment

A game process according to a first non-limiting embodiment will be described. In the first non-limiting embodiment, a player character PC is caused to perform different actions in different modes, i.e., switch between a first and a second mode. In the first mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching, at a field character FC as a target on a field, an item that affects a field character FC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M. In the second mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching, at a field character FC on a field, a fighting character BC that fights against a field character FC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M.

In FIG. **8**, a game image indicating that the player character PC is disposed in a virtual space is displayed on the display **12** of the game system **1**. The player character PC performs an action in the virtual space according to the user's operation. In the game image displayed on the display **12**, a field character FC disposed in the virtual space is displayed. A plurality of field characters FC are disposed on the field in the virtual space, and are caused to perform an action in the virtual space by automatic control performed by the processor **81** based on a predetermined algorithm or the like. A user who operates the player character PC can cause the player character PC to perform an action to catch a field character FC, and set the field character FC in the user's possession.

In FIG. **8**, the player character PC is holding an empty ball item B, and is about to throw the held ball item B in the virtual space. Here, the empty ball item B serves as a catching item that can be caused to hit a field character FC on the field and thereby catch the field character FC. For example, when an empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC hits a field character, it is determined whether or not the field character is successfully caught (successful-catch determination). If the result of the successful-catch determination is positive, the field character FC hit by the ball item B is successfully caught and set in the user's possession.

For example, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing a chosen item (e.g., an action of getting into the position illustrated in FIG. **8**), by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**). In addition, a direction in which the player character PC throws a chosen item is indicated by an aiming point M. The location of the aiming point M is moved according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**, the orientation of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, or the motion or pointed location of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**). Thereafter, when the user ends the operation input for causing the player character PC to perform the action of getting into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), the player character PC is caused to perform an action of throwing the chosen item in the direction indicated by the aiming point M.

For example, the user can change categories of items to be thrown by the player character PC, by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**). In the first non-limiting embodiment, there are at least the first mode in which a first category including a plurality of items that affect a field character FC is chosen, and the second mode in which a second category including a plurality of fighting characters BC that fight against a field character FC on the field is chosen. The user can change the categories (modes) by pressing down the operation button **55**. The user can also choose an item to be thrown by the player character PC from the chosen category, by pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**. In the non-limiting example of FIG. **8**, projectile information Im**1** is displayed, indicating that the first category (first mode) has been chosen, and an empty ball item B has been chosen from the first category by the user. For example, the first category may include a plurality of ball items having different functions or appearances, or items that are other than ball items and that when thrown, support the user in throwing a ball item and catching a field character by, for example, setting a limitation on a movement of the field character.

When an item chosen from the first category is a projectile, a first aiming point M**1** (e.g., an aiming point in a normal display form) is displayed. When an empty ball item B that can catch a field character FC is chosen as a projectile from the first category, the location of the first aiming point M**1** can be moved by the above operation of moving the aiming point M, or alternatively, the first aiming point M**1** can be set (locked on) to a location where the first aiming point M**1** is aligned with a field character FC by the user performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZL button) **39**). When the first aiming point M**1** is locked on to the location of a field character FC, a thrown item is more likely to hit the field character FC.

When the first aiming point M**1** is locked on to a field character FC, catch information Ig indicating how likely the field character FC is to be caught by hitting the field character FC with an empty ball item B is displayed in the vicinity of the first aiming point M**1**. For example, an indicator indicating how likely the result of the successful-catch determination is to be positive when an empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC hits a field character FC, is displayed as the catch information Ig. The catch information Ig may be an indicator indicating one of a plurality levels indicating how likely the result of the successful-catch determination is to be positive, or an indicator indicating a numerical value indicating the probability or degree of the positive result of the determination. The catch information Ig may be an indicator representing how likely the result of the successful-catch determination is to be positive, by design or text, a size or motion, a color or lightness, or the like. The catch information Ig may not be displayed on the display **12**, and may be represented by sounds, vibrations applied to the controller **3** and/or **4**, or the like indicating how likely the result of the successful-catch determination is to be positive.

FIGS. **9** and **10** illustrate game images that are displayed on the display **12**, showing that an empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC hits a field character FC, so that the field character FC is successfully caught. For example, the user ends an operation input of causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), and thereby, can allow the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a chosen item in the direction indicated by the first aiming point M**1**. When the empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC hits a field character FC, a scene image showing that the field character FC is hit (and/or caught) is displayed as illustrated in FIG. **9**. When the field character FC is successfully caught, a scene image showing the field character FC is put into the empty ball item B, which means that the field character FC is caught, is displayed as illustrated in FIG. **10**. Thereafter, the field character FC successfully caught is set in the user's possession. It should be noted that the field character FC successfully caught may be allowed to be used as a fighting character BC in the subsequent process by the user.

When the empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC does not hit a field character FC, or the player character PC fails to catch a field character FC, a scene image showing such a situation is displayed on the display **12**. Here, when the player character PC fails to catch a field character FC, there may be a disadvantage such as the escape of the field character FC, or the outbreak of a fight due to an attack by the field character FC.

Although it is assumed above that a condition for catching a field character FC is that an empty ball item B thrown by the player character PC hits the field character FC, the field character FC may be caught if the empty ball item B reaches a predetermined range including the location of the field character FC irrespective of whether the empty ball item B hits the field character FC. In that case, how likely it is to catch a field character FC may be changed, depending on whether the field character FC is hit.

In addition, how likely it is to catch a field character FC may be changed according to a state (emotions, endurance, remaining physical strength, size, movement, or the like) of the field character FC to be caught, or the type of an item (e.g., the type of an empty ball item B) thrown by the player character PC. Even when how likely it is to catch a field character FC is changed, the user can know the change from the catch information Ig, which is displayed in the vicinity of the first aiming point M**1**.

Although in the first non-limiting embodiment, an empty ball item B is used as a non-limiting example of an item that is chosen from the first category (first mode) including a plurality of items that affect a field character FC, the first category may include other types of items. For example, the first category may include an item that slows the movement of a hit field character FC, an item that deprives physical strength of a hit field character FC, an item that changes emotions of a hit field character FC, and an item that attracts a field character FC. By using a combination of these items to hit and attract a field character FC (an item is placed at a location to which a field character FC should be attracted) and the like, the effect of making it more likely to catch a field character FC by throwing a catching item (e.g., an empty ball item B) can be expected.

In FIG. **11**, the player character PC is holding a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC, and is about to throw the held ball item Bs in the virtual space in the second mode. Here, when the ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC is thrown on the field, the fighting character BC appears in the virtual space. For example, when the player character PC throws the ball item Bs at near a field character FC, the fighting character BC appears from the ball item Bs and starts fighting against the field character FC. It should be noted that a fight is directly started on the field without changing places.

For example, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing a chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs) (e.g., an action of getting into the position illustrated in FIG. **11** and FIG. **12**), by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**). In addition, a direction in which the player character PC throws the chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs) is indicated by the aiming point M. The location of the aiming point M is moved according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**, the orientation of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, or the motion or pointed location of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**). Thereafter, when the user ends the operation input for causing the player character PC to perform the action of getting into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), the player character PC is caused to perform an action of throwing the chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs) in the direction indicated by the aiming point M.

As described above, the user can change the category to the second category (second mode) including a plurality of fighting characters BC by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**). Thereafter, the user can choose a fighting character BC that the player character PC is to throw, from the chosen second category, by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**). For example, in the non-limiting examples of FIGS. **11** and **12**, projectile information Im**2** is displayed, indicating that the second category (second mode) has been chosen, and the user has chosen a predetermined fighting character BC from the second category.

When a fighting character BC (a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC) is chosen as a projectile from the second category, a second aiming point M**2** is displayed. The second aiming point M**2** is displayed in a form different that of the first aiming point M**1**. As a non-limiting example, the second aiming point M**2** does not have the normal display form, and is displayed as a colored mark imitating a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC. By thus displaying the second aiming point M**2** in a display form different from that of the first aiming point M**1**, a projectile that the player character PC is trying to throw can be easily recognized while seeing the aiming point.

As illustrated in FIG. **12**, when the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying a range in which a field character FC and a fighting character BC can fight against each other, the second aiming point M**2** is changed to a third aiming point M**3**. The third aiming point M**3** is displayed in a display form that is different from those of the first aiming point M**1** and the second aiming point M**2**. As a non-limiting example, the third aiming point M**3** is displayed as a mark to which a design indicating a fight is added at a center of the second aiming point M**2**. By thus displaying the third aiming point M**3** in a display form different from those of the first aiming point M**1** and the second aiming point M**2**, the user is allowed to easily recognize that the player character PC can fight against a field character FC by throwing a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC, while seeing the aiming point.

In FIG. **13**, the display **12** displays a game image in which a fighting character BC appearing from a ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC is fighting against a field character FC. For example, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a chosen fighting character BC in the direction indicated by the third aiming point M**3** by ending an operation input for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position (e.g., releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**). When the ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC reaches a range in which the fighting character BC can fight against the field character FC, the fighting character BC appears from that range. Thereafter, the fighting character BC starts fighting against the field character FC. Thus, in the first non-limiting embodiment, by causing the player character PC to perform the same action, i.e., an action of throwing a projectile in the direction indicated by the aiming point M, the field character FC can be subjected to various situations on the field, because the categories (modes) of a projectile can be changed.

While a fighting character BC is fighting against a field character FC, a gauge G**1** indicating a state of the field character FC is displayed at a location that is set, corresponding to a location of the field character FC. Here, the state of the field character FC indicated by the gauge G**1** indicates at least a parameter related to the remaining physical strength of the field character FC during a fight against the fighting character BC. When an attack on the field character FC by the fighting character BC is effective, the parameter gradually decreases according to the attack. When the remaining physical strength indicated by the gauge G**1** is zero, the fighting character BC wins the fight. As described below, the state of the field character FC indicated by the gauge G**1** also indicates how likely it is to catch the field character FC during the fight.

As illustrated in FIG. **14**, while a fighting character BC is fighting against a field character FC, the user can control actions of the player character PC and/or the fighting character BC by choosing commands. For example, while a fighting character BC is fighting against a field character FC, a plurality of command-indicating images C for allowing the user to choose a command are displayed. For example, in FIG. **14**, as a non-limiting example of the command-indicating images C, an attack command, an item command, an appear/disappear command, and an escape command are displayed. The user can choose any of the commands by performing an operation input using an input section provided on the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, or the touch panel **13** of the main body apparatus **2**.

The user can control an action of a fighting character BC by performing an operation input for choosing the attack command. As a non-limiting example, when the attack command is chosen, the user is prompted to choose one of a plurality of kinds of attack. By performing an operation of choosing one from the plurality of kinds of attack, the user can cause a fighting character BC to perform an attack action corresponding to the chosen kind of attack.

The user can control an action of the player character PC by performing an operation input for choosing the item command. As a non-limiting example, when the item command is chosen, the user is prompted to choose one of a plurality of items including a catching item. By performing an operation of choosing an item to be used from the plurality of items, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of using the chosen item. As a non-limiting example, by performing an operation of choosing a catching item for catching a field character FC during the fight, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of catching a field character FC using the catching item.

A catching item used during a fight may be the same as or similar to the above ball item B. For example, when the command to use a catching item is chosen during the fight, a scene that the player character PC throws a catching item at a field character FC during the fight is displayed. As to whether or not the field character FC is successfully caught, successful-catch determination is performed as in the non-fight state. During the fight, the successful-catch determination is performed based on a state of the field character FC that is changed during the fight, i.e., the state of the field character FC indicated by the gauge G**1**. Specifically, when a state (e.g., the remaining physical strength) of the field character FC changed due to the fight is reduced to a predetermined state, the result of the successful-catch determination is more likely to be positive. It should be noted that the above threshold may be changed according to at least one of the type of the field character FC, the type of the chosen catching item, an ability value of the player character PC, an ability value of the fighting character BC, and the like. Even when the result of the successful-catch determination is positive during the fight, the field character FC is caught by the command using the catching item, and is set in the user's possession. As another non-limiting example, while a fighting character BC is fighting against a field character FC, the player character PC may be caused to perform an action of catching the field character FC using a catching item, by performing an operation input of causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing the catching item at the aiming point M as in catching instead of the operation of choosing a command unlike the above fight.

The user can cause a fighting character BC to disappear during the fight or can cause another fighting character BC to appear during the fight, by performing an operation input of choosing the appear/disappear command. It should be noted that the existing fighting character BC may be replaced by another fighting character BC that newly appears, or in addition to the existing fighting character BC, another fighting character BC may newly appear. As a non-limiting example, when the appear/disappear command is chosen, the user is prompted to choose one of a plurality of characters that is to appear, and by operating an operation of choosing the one from the plurality of characters, the user can cause the player character PC to perform an action of causing the chosen character to appear as a fighting character BC.

The user can end a fight between a fighting character BC and a field character FC, and control an action of the player character PC such that the player character PC performs an action of escaping from the field character FC, by performing an operation input of choosing the escape command. At that time, the appearing fighting character BC may be collected by the player character PC to disappear from the field, or may be left as it is on the field.

Thus, in a fight between a fighting character BC and a field character FC, the field character FC can be caught by choosing the command to use a catching item as in the non-fight state. Therefore, the user can choose whether to catch a field character FC without fighting against the field character FC using a fighting character BC, or to catch a field character FC by performing the fight, resulting in a game having various strategic aspects.

Although in the first non-limiting embodiment, a fighting character BC is released in the virtual space by the player character PC throwing a ball item Bs containing the fighting character BC in the direction indicated by the aiming point M, a fighting character BC may be released in the virtual space by the player character PC directly throwing the fighting character BC.

The location and orientation of a virtual camera for generating a game image to be displayed on the display **12** may be set such that the virtual camera is located behind the player character PC, and the player character PC is included in the range of view of the virtual camera, or such that the first-person point of view of the player character PC is provided. In either case, the location and/or orientation of the virtual camera may be changeable according to the user's operation input. In that case, a field character FC may be out of the range of view during the fight or the gauge G**1** indicating a state of the field character FC may be out of the display range, depending on the location or orientation of the player character PC in the virtual space. If the location and/or orientation of the virtual camera are changeable according to the user's operation input even during a fight between a fighting character BC and a field character FC, then when a fight between a field character FC and a fighting character BC starts without the field character FC being displayed, the gauge G**1** indicating a state of the field character FC, i.e., an indicator affecting catching of the field character FC, can be displayed according to the user's operation. The player character PC may be allowed to freely move during a fight according to the user's operation input. Therefore, no matter what kind of situation a fight starts in, the camera can be subsequently appropriately changed by the user. Therefore, a fight can be caused to start freely irrespective of situations.

In addition, in the first non-limiting embodiment, a fighting character BC appearing from a ball item Bs can be caused to perform an action different from that during the fight on the field. For example, in the first non-limiting embodiment, when the player character PC throws a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC on the field in the virtual space, the fighting character BC may be caused to merely appear on the field, or the fighting character BC may be caused to appear and perform a predetermined action on a virtual object OBJ disposed on the field.

For example, as illustrated in FIG. **15**, a collection object OBJ is disposed on the field in the virtual space. In the first non-limiting embodiment, the player character PC may collect the collection object OBJ by directly touching the collection object OBJ, and a fighting character BC may be caused to appear and collect the collection object OBJ.

In FIG. **15**, the player character PC is holding a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC as in the state of FIG. **11**, and is performing an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing the chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs), according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**). In the non-limiting example of FIG. **15**, the projectile information Im**2** is displayed, indicating that the second category (second mode) has been chosen, and a predetermined fighting character BC has been chosen from the second category by the user.

As described above, when a fighting character BC (a ball item Bs containing the fighting character BC) chosen from the second category is a projectile, the second aiming point M**2** is displayed. When the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying the range in which an action of collecting a collection object OBJ is allowed, the second aiming point M**2** is changed to a fourth aiming point M**4**. The fourth aiming point M**4** is displayed in a display form different from those of the first aiming point M**1**, the second aiming point M**2**, and the third aiming point M**3**. As a non-limiting example, the fourth aiming point M**4** is displayed as a mark in which a design imitating a portion of the fighting character BC is added at a center of the second aiming point M**2**. Thus, by displaying the fourth aiming point M**4** in a display form different from those of the first aiming point M**1**, the second aiming point M**2**, and the third aiming point M**3**, it is more easily recognized that the field character FC can be caused to appear in a state different from the fight state by throwing the ball item Bs containing the fighting character BC, while seeing the aiming point.

In FIG. **16**, a game image that a fighting character BC appearing from a ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC is collecting a collection object OBJ is displayed on the display **12**. For example, the user stops performing an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), and thereby can cause the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a chosen fighting character BC in the direction indicated by the fourth aiming point M**4**. When the ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC reaches a range in which the player character PC can collect a collection object OBJ, the fighting character BC appears from the range. Thereafter, the fighting character BC starts collecting the collection object OBJ.

In the first non-limiting embodiment, information about a field character FC to which the aiming point M is locked on can be displayed (pictorial representation). For example, when a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (down button) **34** or the down button of the directional pad) is performed with the first aiming point M**1** locked on to the field character FC as illustrated in FIG. **8**, i.e., an operation of displaying a pictorial representation is performed while performing an operation of locking the first aiming point M**1** on to the field character FC, information about the field character FC is displayed as illustrated in FIG. **17**. Here, information about a field character FC includes mission information about a history of missions in a game including at least the number of field characters FC to which the aiming point M is locked on and which have been caught by the player character PC and the number of times of a fight against the field character FC. In a non-limiting example of a pictorial representation of field characters FC illustrated in FIG. **17**, for a field character A of a plurality of field characters FC to which the aiming point M is locked on, the history of each of features such as the number of catches (the number of times a field character A was caught), the number of heavy size catches (the number of times a relatively heavy field character A was caught), the number of times of a fight (the number of times of a fight against a field character A), the number of beaten field characters A (the number of field characters A that were beaten during a fight), and the number of types of observed field characters A (the number of types of field characters A that appeared in the virtual space and were displayed on the display **12**) is displayed as information about the field character FC. In the non-limiting example of the pictorial representation of field characters FC of FIG. **17**, a mission to be accomplished and the progress of the mission are displayed for each feature. As a non-limiting example, as the mission information, for each feature of the pictorial representation, a value required for accomplishing a mission (the number of times required for accomplishing a mission) is displayed for each stage. For a mission that has already been accomplished, a mark (check mark in the non-limiting example of FIG. **17**) indicating that the mission already has been accomplished is given to the value required for accomplishing the mission.

Thus, the history information of a mission to be accomplished for a field character FC on the field is displayed, and can be referenced for choosing whether to catch the field character FC or fight against the field character FC. It should be noted that information about a field character FC different from the field character A to which an aiming point is locked on may also be displayed. For example, in the non-limiting example of FIG. **17**, a tag is provided at a right end of a display screen for each field character FC (e.g., field characters A to E), and information about the other field characters FC can be displayed by performing an operation of choosing the respective corresponding tags.

### Second Non-Limiting Embodiment

A game process according to a second non-limiting embodiment will be described. In this non-limiting embodiment, a player character PC can fight against a boss character MC that is a non-limiting example of a field character disposed on a field in a virtual space. In the second non-limiting embodiment, a game process is performed on the boss character MC. Here, the boss character MC appears on the same field in the same virtual space on which a field character FC appears, and attacks the player character PC and moves toward the player character PC. Therefore, the user may operate the player character PC such that the player character PC escapes an attack from the boss character MC, or the player character PC hits the boss character MC with a boss attack item AI. In the second non-limiting embodiment, the player character PC is caused to perform different actions in different modes, i.e., switch between a first and a second mode. In the first mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching, at the boss character MC as a target on the field, an item that affects the boss character MC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M. In the second mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching, at the boss character MC on the field, a fighting character BC that fights against the boss character MC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M.

In FIG. **18**, a game image that the player character PC and the boss character MC are disposed in the virtual space is displayed on the display **12**. For example, the boss character MC appears in the virtual space in a special event (e.g., a boss fight event) during progression of a game, and is operated on the field in the virtual space by automatic control performed by the processor **81** based on a predetermined algorithm or the like as with a field character FC. The user who operates the player character PC can cause the player character PC or a fighting character BC to fight against the boss character MC. It should be noted that the boss character MC may be forbidden to be caught, unlike the above field character FC.

In FIG. **18**, the player character PC is holding a boss attack item AI, and is about to throw the held boss attack item AI in the virtual space. Here, the boss fight event can be progressed by hitting the boss character MC on the field with the boss attack item AI. For example, a boss state parameter that indicates a state of the boss character MC in the boss fight event is provided. The boss state parameter is reduced when the boss attack item AI hits the boss character MC. As a non-limiting example, when the boss attack item AI thrown by the player character PC hits the boss character MC, the attack is assessed based on the site of the hit, the state of the boss character MC, and the like, and a reduction amount based on the assessment of the attack is subtracted from the boss state parameter of the boss character MC. When the boss state parameter is reduced to reach a threshold (e.g., zero), the boss character MC is beaten, so that the boss fight event is cleared. In the non-limiting example of a game image of FIG. **18**, a gauge G**2** indicating the remaining amount of the boss state parameter of the boss character MC is displayed at an upper portion of a display screen.

In the boss fight event, the user can also cause the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing a chosen boss attack item AI (e.g., an action of getting into the position illustrated in FIG. **18**) by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**). A direction in which the player character PC throws a chosen boss attack item AI is indicated by a first aiming point M**1**. The location of the first aiming point M**1** is moved according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**, the orientation of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, or the motion or pointed location of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**). Thereafter, when the user ends the operation input for causing the player character PC to perform the action of getting into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), the player character PC is caused to perform an action of throwing the chosen boss attack item AI in the direction indicated by the first aiming point M**1**.

In the boss fight event, the user can also change categories of an item to be thrown by the player character PC, by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**). In the second non-limiting embodiment, there are at least the first mode in which a first category including a plurality of items that affect the boss character MC is chosen, and the second mode in which a second category including a plurality of fighting characters BC that fight against the boss character MC on the field is chosen. The user can change the categories (modes) by pressing down the operation button **55**. The user can also choose an item to be thrown by the player character PC from the chosen category, by pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**. For example, in the non-limiting example of FIG. **18**, projectile information Im**3** is displayed, indicating that the first category (first mode) has been chosen, and a boss attack item AI has been chosen from the first category by the user. In the boss fight event, when a boss attack item AI is chosen as a projectile from the first category, the first aiming point M**1** (e.g., an aiming point in a normal display form) is also displayed.

As described above, when the user ends the operation input of causing the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position (e.g., the user releases the operation button (ZR button) **61**), the player character PC can be caused to perform an action of throwing a chosen boss attack item AI in the direction indicated by the first aiming point M**1**. When the boss attack item AI thrown by the player character PC hits the boss character MC, the boss state parameter of the boss character MC is reduced based on the above attack assessment. When the boss attack item AI thrown by the player character PC fails to hit the boss character MC, the boss state parameter of the boss character MC is maintained, or the boss state parameter is increased by a predetermined amount.

Although in the foregoing, a condition for reducing the boss state parameter of the boss character MC is that a boss attack item AI thrown by the player character PC hits the boss character MC, the boss state parameter of the boss character MC may be reduced if the boss attack item AI reaches a predetermined range including the location of the boss character MC irrespective of whether the boss attack item AI directly hits the boss character MC . . . .

Although in the second non-limiting embodiment, a boss attack item AI is used as a non-limiting example of an item chosen from the first category (first mode) including a plurality of items that affect the boss character MC, the first category may include other types of items. For example, the first category may include an item that slows the movement of the boss character MC when the item hits the boss character, an item that changes emotions of the boss character MC when the item hits the boss character, and an item that attracts the boss character MC. By using a combination of these items to hit and attract the boss character MC (an item is placed at a location to which the boss character MC should be attracted) and the like, the effect of making it more likely for a boss attack item AI to hit the boss character MC can be expected.

In the second non-limiting embodiment, a fighting character BC may be caused to appear on the field and fight against the boss character MC. In FIG. **19**, the player character PC is holding a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC, and is about to throw the held ball item Bs in the virtual space. Here, when the ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC is thrown on the field in the boss fight event, the fighting character BC appears in the virtual space. For example, when the player character PC throws the ball item Bs at near the boss character MC, the fighting character BC appears from the ball item Bs and starts fighting against the boss character MC. It should be noted that a fight is directly started on the field without changing places.

For example, in the boss fight event, the user can also cause the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing a chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs) (e.g., an action of getting into the position illustrated in FIG. **19**), by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**). In addition, a direction in which the player character PC throws the chosen fighting character BC (ball item Bs) is indicated by a second aiming point M**2**. The location of the second aiming point M**2** is moved according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**, the orientation of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, or the motion or pointed location of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**). As illustrated in FIG. **19**, in the boss fight event, when the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying a range in which the boss character MC and the fighting character BC can fight against each other, the second aiming point M**2** is changed to a third aiming point M**3**.

In the boss fight event, the user can also change the category to the second category (second mode) including a plurality of fighting characters BC by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**). Thereafter, the user can choose a fighting character BC that the player character PC is to throw, from the chosen second category, by performing a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**). For example, in the non-limiting examples of FIGS. **19** and **20**, projectile information Im**2** is displayed, indicating that the second category (second mode) has been chosen, and the user has chosen a predetermined fighting character BC from the second category.

In FIG. **20**, a game image that a fighting character BC appearing from a ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC is fighting against the boss character MC is displayed on the display **12**. For example, in the boss fight event, the user can also cause the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a chosen fighting character BC in the direction indicated by the third aiming point M**3** by ending an operation input for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position (e.g., releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**). When the ball item Bs thrown by the player character PC reaches a range in which the fighting character BC can fight against the boss character MC, the fighting character BC appears from that range. Thereafter, the fighting character BC starts fighting against the boss character MC. Thus, in the second non-limiting embodiment, by causing the player character PC to perform the same action, i.e., an action of throwing a projectile in the direction indicated by the aiming point M, the boss character MC can be subjected to various situations on the field, because the categories (modes) of a projectile can be changed.

While a fighting character BC is fighting against the boss character MC, a gauge G**3** indicating a state of the boss character MC is displayed at a location that is set, corresponding to a location of the boss character MC. Here, the state of the boss character MC indicated by the gauge G**3** indicates at least a parameter related to the remaining physical strength of the boss character MC during a fight against the fighting character BC. When an attack on the boss character MC by the fighting character BC is effective, the parameter gradually decreases according to the attack. When the remaining physical strength of the boss character MC indicated by the gauge G**3** is zero, the fighting character BC wins the fight.

While a fighting character BC is fighting against the boss character MC, the user can control an action of the fighting character BC by choosing a command. As a non-limiting example, by performing an operation of choosing one from a plurality of attack commands, the user can cause a fighting character BC to perform an attack action corresponding to the chosen attack command.

When a fighting character BC wins a fight against the boss character MC, a condition for clearing the boss fight event is adjusted so as to be more easily satisfied. As a first non-limiting example, when a fighting character BC wins a fight against the boss character MC, a limitation is set on the movement in the virtual space of the boss character MC during at least a predetermined period of time. This allows the user to more easily hit the boss character MC with a boss attack item AI, and therefore, to more easily reduce the boss state parameter for clearing the boss fight event, so that the condition for clearing the boss fight event is more easily satisfied. As a second non-limiting example, when a fighting character BC wins a fight against the boss character MC, the amount of a reduction in the boss state parameter corresponding to hitting of the boss character MC with a boss attack item AI is relatively increased during at least a predetermined period of time. This allows the user to more easily reduce the boss state parameter, so that the condition for clearing the boss fight event is more easily satisfied. As a third non-limiting example, when a fighting character BC wins a fight against the boss character MC, the boss state parameter as of the end of the fight is reduced by a predetermined amount. This allows the user to more easily reduce the boss state parameter, so that the condition for clearing the boss fight event is more easily satisfied. It should be noted that in the second non-limiting embodiment, by combining at least two of the above non-limiting examples, the condition for clearing the boss fight event may be adjusted so as to be more easily satisfied.

It should be noted that a fight between a fighting character BC and the boss character MC in the boss fight event may be allowed to start only when the boss character MC is in a predetermined state. For example, the predetermined state may be a state that the boss character MC is in an unguarded moment, a state that the boss character MC is in a predetermined position, a state that the boss state parameter of the boss character MC has reached a predetermined value, a state that a predetermined period of time has passed since the start of the boss fight event, or the like. In addition, the fight may not be forbidden to start in a state that a fighting character BC does not appear even when the player character PC throws a ball item Bs, a state that the player character PC does not perform a throwing action even when the user performs an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a throwing action, a state that a ball item Bs cannot be chosen as a projectile, or the like.

Thus, in the second non-limiting embodiment, in the boss fight event, in which the boss character MC appears, an operation of throwing an item that affects the boss character MC (boss attack item AI) in the direction indicated by an aiming point, and an operation of throwing a fighting character BC that fights against the boss character MC in the direction indicated by an aiming point, can be allowed, and therefore, the user can choose whether to attack the boss character MC using an item or attack the boss character MC using a fighting character BC, resulting in a game having various strategic aspects.

In the boss fight event, the location and orientation of a virtual camera for generating a game image to be displayed on the display **12** may be set such that the virtual camera is located behind the player character PC, and the player character PC is included in the range of view of the virtual camera, or such that the first-person point of view of the player character PC is provided. In either case, the location and/or orientation of the virtual camera may be changeable according to the user's operation input.

In the first and second non-limiting embodiments, the player character PC performs a throwing action in the direction indicated by an aiming point in different modes that can be changed, i.e., the first and second modes. A larger number of modes may be provided. For example, there may be a category including a plurality of items that affect a fighting character BC, a category including a plurality of items that affect a collection object OBJ, a category including a plurality of items that affect the player character PC, a category including a plurality of items that affect the virtual space, and the like. By allowing choice of these categories, three or more modes may be changed.

Next, a non-limiting example of a specific process executed in the game system **1** in the first and second non-limiting embodiments will be described with reference to FIGS. **21** to **26**. FIG. **21** is a diagram illustrating a non-limiting example of a data area set in the DRAM **85** of the main body apparatus **2** in the first and second non-limiting embodiments. It should be noted that in addition to the data illustrated in FIG. **21**, the DRAM **85** may also store data used in other processes, and those data will not be described in detail.

Various programs Pa that are executed in the game system **1** are stored in a program storage area of the DRAM **85**. In this non-limiting example, the programs Pa include an application program (e.g., a game program) for performing information processing based on data obtained from the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4**, and the main body apparatus **2**. Note that the programs Pa may be previously stored in the flash memory **84**, may be obtained from a storage medium removably attached to the game system **1** (e.g., a predetermined type of storage medium attached to the slot **23**) and then stored in the DRAM **85**, or may be obtained from another apparatus via a network, such as the Internet, and then stored in the DRAM **85**. The processor **81** executes the programs Pa stored in the DRAM **85**.

Various kinds of data that are used in processes such as an information process that are executed in the game system **1** are stored in a data storage area of the DRAM **85**. In this non-limiting example, the DRAM **85** stores operation data Da, player character data Db, field character data Dc, boss character data Dd, fighting character data De, collection object data Df, obtained character data Dg, history data Dh, item data Di, aiming point data Dj, catch information data Dk, character fight flag data Dm, image data Dn, and the like.

The operation data Da is obtained, as appropriate, from each of the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4** and the main body apparatus **2**. As described above, the operation data obtained from each of the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4** and the main body apparatus **2** includes information about an input from each input section (specifically, each button, an analog stick, or a touch panel) (specifically, information about an operation). In this non-limiting example, operation data is obtained from each of the left controller **3** and/or the right controller **4** and the main body apparatus **2**. The obtained operation data is used to update the operation data Da as appropriate. Note that the operation data Da may be updated for each frame that is the cycle of a process executed in the game system **1**, or may be updated each time operation data is obtained.

The player character data Db indicates the place and position of the player character PC disposed in the virtual space, the movement and state in the virtual space of the player character PC, and the like.

The field character data Dc indicates the type, place, position, movement, and state of each field character FC disposed in the virtual space, and the like. The boss character data Dd indicates the type, place, position, movement, and state of the boss character MC disposed in the virtual space, and the like.

The fighting character data De indicates the type, place, position, movement, and state of a fighting character BC appearing in the virtual space, and the like.

The collection object data Df indicates the type, place, position, and state of each collection object OBJ disposed in the virtual space, and the like.

The obtained character data Dg indicates the types and number of field characters FC (fighting characters) obtained by the user by catching or the like, and the like.

The history data Dh indicates mission information about the history of missions in a game.

The item data Di indicates the types and number of items possessed by the player character PC, and the like.

The aiming point data Dj indicates the types and locations of aiming points that are a target for a projectile that is thrown by the player character PC.

The catch information data Dk relates to catch information indicating how likely the result of successful-catch determination is to be positive for a field character FC to which an aiming point is locked on.

The character fight flag data Dm indicates a character fight flag that is set on when a fight using a fighting character BC is allowed in the boss fight event.

The image data Dn is used to display, on a display screen (e.g., the display **12** of the main body apparatus **2**), images (e.g., an image of the player character PC, an image of a field character FC, an image of the boss character MC, an image of a fighting character BC, an image of each item, an image of a collection object OBJ or other objects, an image of an aiming point, an image of the virtual space, and a background image).

Next, a specific non-limiting example of a game process in the first and second non-limiting embodiments will be described with reference to FIGS. **22** to **26**. FIG. **22** is a flowchart illustrating a non-limiting example of a game process executed in the game system **1**. FIG. **23** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of an item use process executed in step S**125** of FIG. **22**. FIG. **24** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a first character use process executed in step S**127** of FIG. **22**. FIG. **25** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a boss item use process executed in step S**130** of FIG. **22**. FIG. **26** is a subroutine illustrating a specific non-limiting example of a second character use process executed in step S**132** of FIG. **22**. In the present non-limiting example, the processes of FIGS. **22** to **26** are executed by the processor **81** executing a predetermined application program (game program) included the programs Pa. The processes of FIGS. **22** to **26** are started with any appropriate timing.

It should be noted that steps in the flowcharts of FIGS. **22** to **26**, which are merely illustrative, may be executed in a different order, or another step may be executed in addition to (or instead of) each step, if a similar effect is obtained. In this non-limiting example, it is assumed that the processor **81** executes each step of the flowchart. Alternatively, a portion of the steps of the flowchart may be executed by a processor or dedicated circuit other than the processor **81**. In addition, a portion of the steps executed by the main body apparatus **2** may be executed by another information processing apparatus that can communicate with the main body apparatus **2** (e.g., a server that can communicate with the main body apparatus **2** via a network). Specifically, the steps of FIGS. **22** to **26** may be executed by a plurality of information processing apparatuses including the main body apparatus **2** cooperating with each other.

In FIG. **22**, the processor **81** performs initial setting for the game process (step S**121**), and proceeds to the next step. For example, in the initial setting, the processor **81** initializes parameters for performing processes described below.

Next, the processor **81** obtains operation data from the left controller **3**, the right controller **4**, and/or the main body apparatus **2**, and updates the operation data Da (step S**122**), and proceeds to the next step.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not the boss fight event is being carried out (step S**123**). For example, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to start the boss fight event, and the boss fight event is not being currently carried out, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**124**, assuming that the current situation is a normal situation on the field. It should be noted that a game situation that is neither in the boss fight event nor in a normal situation on the field will not be described. Otherwise, if the operation data Da indicates an instruction to start the boss fight event, or the boss fight event is being currently carried out, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**129**.

In step S**124**, the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, whether or not an item is to be used in the current situation. If the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use an item or the current situation is in a scene in which an item is used, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**125**. Otherwise, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to use an item and the current situation is not in a scene in which an item is used, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**126**. As a non-limiting example, if an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform an action of getting into a throwing position for throwing an item (e.g., pressing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, and the first category (first mode) has been chosen as a projectile according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**), the processor **81** determines that the user's operation indicates an instruction to use an item. It should be noted that even if the current situation is in a scene in which an item is used, then when the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use a fighting character, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**124** is negative.

In step S**125**, the processor **81** executes the item use process, and proceeds to step S**134**. The item use process of step S**125** will be described below with reference to FIG. **23**.

In FIG. **23**, the processor **81** determines whether or not an item use scene process is being currently executed (step S**140**). For example, if a catching item use scene process or an item use scene process has been started in step S**149** or S**153** described below, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**140** is positive. If the item use scene process is not being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**141**. Otherwise, if the item use scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**154**.

In step S**141**, the processor **81** sets an item to be thrown by the player character PC, sets the first aiming point M**1**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** looks up the operation data Da and the item data Di, chooses and sets an item to be thrown from the items possessed by the player character PC according to an operation input for choosing an item (e.g., an operation input for pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**), and sets the projectile information Im**1** (see FIGS. **8** and **9**). The processor **81** also looks up the operation data Da, sets the aiming point to the first aiming point M**1** (see FIG. **8**), sets the location of the aiming point according to an operation input for moving the aiming point (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not the item set in step S**141** is a catching item (e.g., an empty ball item B) (step S**142**). If the item set in step S**141** is a catching item, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**143**. Otherwise, if the item set in step S**141** is not a catching item, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**152**.

In step S**143**, the processor **81** determines whether or not an aiming point is locked on to a field character FC. For example, if the operation data Da indicates that an operation input for locking the aiming point on to a field character FC (e.g., an operation input of pressing down the operation button (ZL button) **39**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**143** is positive. If an aiming point is locked on to a field character FC, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**144**. Otherwise, if the aiming point is not locked on to a field character FC, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**147**.

In step S**144**, the processor **81** sets the first aiming point M**1** at a lock-on location, adds the catch information Ig to the first aiming point M**1**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** extracts, as a target to which the aiming point is to be locked on, a field character FC that is located closest to the player character PC in front of the player character PC, based on the field character data Dc. Thereafter, the processor **81** sets the locked-on first aiming point M**1** at a location (e.g., a center-of-gravity location) where the first aiming point M**1** overlays the field character FC extracted as a target to which the aiming point is to be locked on, and updates the aiming point data Dj. The processor **81** also calculates, based on the type and state of the field character FC extracted as a target to which the aiming point is to be locked on, a probability that the result of successful-catch determination about the field character FC would be positive, sets the catch information Ig corresponding to the result of the calculation at a location where the catch information Ig is added to the first aiming point M**1**, and updates the catch information data Dk.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not the pictorial representation is to be displayed (step S**145**). For example, if the operation data Da indicates an instruction to display the pictorial representation (e.g., an operation instruction to press down the operation button (down button) **34**) or the pictorial representation is being currently displayed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**146**. Otherwise, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to display the pictorial representation and the pictorial representation is not being currently displayed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**148**.

In step S**146**, the processor **81** executes a pictorial representation image setting process, and proceeds to step S**148**. For example, the processor **81** extracts, from the history data Dh, mission information about the history of missions in a game such as the number of caught field characters FC to which an aiming point is locked on, the number of times of a fight, and the like. Thereafter, based on the extracted mission information, the processor **81** sets a pictorial representation image of a field character FC to which an aiming point is locked on (see FIG. **17**).

In step S**147**, the processor **81** determines whether or not the first aiming point M**1** is disposed, overlaying the catch range of a field character FC (step S**147**). For example, if the aiming point data Dj and the field character data Dc indicate that the first aiming point M**1** is disposed, overlaying a range in which a field character in the field character data Dc that is disposed on the field can be caught, the result of the determination in step S**147** is positive. If the first aiming point M**1** is disposed, overlaying the catch range of a field character FC, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**148**. Otherwise, if the first aiming point M**1** does not overlay the catch range of a field character FC, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**152**.

In step S**148**, the processor **81** determines whether or not the item is to be thrown. For example, if the operation data Da indicates that an operation of causing the player character to throw an item (e.g., an operation of ending an operation of causing the player character to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**148** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that the item is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**149**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that the item is to be thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**149**, the processor **81** starts the catching item use scene process of causing the player character PC to throw the catching item, and ends the subroutine. It should be noted that the processor **81** updates the aiming point data Dj such that the displayed first aiming point M**1** is removed during the start of the catching item use scene process.

In step S**152**, the processor **81** determines whether or not the chosen item is to be thrown as a projectile. For example, if the operation data Da indicates that an operation of causing the player character PC to throw an item (e.g., an operation of ending an operation of causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**152** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that the item is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**153**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that the item is to be thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**153**, the processor **81** starts the item use scene process of causing the player character PC to throw the catching item or an item other than catching items, and ends the subroutine. It should be noted that the processor **81** updates the aiming point data Dj (and the catch information data Dk) so as to remove the displayed first aiming point M**1** (and the catch information Ig) during the start of the item use scene process.

If in step S**140**, the processor **81** determines that the item use scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** executes the item use scene process (step S**154**), and proceeds to the next step. For example, in the item use scene process, the processor **81** sets the player character PC's action of throwing an item (a catching item or an item other than catching items) chosen as a projectile, at the location in the virtual space indicated by the first aiming point M**1**, and also sets a movement of the thrown item in the virtual space.

In the item use scene process, after the end of the scene that the item is thrown, the processor **81** sets the effect of the item at a location where the item has reached. For example, the processor **81** determines what kind of effect is exhibited by throwing the item, based on the type of the item, the location where the thrown item has reached, the state of a target at which the item has been thrown, and the like. Thereafter, based on the determined effect of the item, the processor **81** changes the target in the virtual space at which the item has been thrown. As a non-limiting example, when an item that changes the state of a field character FC is thrown, the state of the field character FC is changed based on the determined effect of the item, and the field character data Dc is updated for the field character FC.

It should be noted that the item effect determination may indicate that no effect has been obtained by throwing an item. As a non-limiting example, when a thrown catching item deviates from the range in which a field character FC can be caught, the item may fall or disappear in the virtual space without affecting the field character FC. If no effect is obtained by throwing an item, the item may be forbidden to be thrown. As a non-limiting example, if no effect is obtained by throwing an item, then even when the user performs an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing the item, the player character PC may be maintained in the throwing position without start of a scene that the item is thrown.

In the item use scene process, the processor **81**, when ending the item use scene process, also ends the item use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor **81** ends the item use scene process, for example, if a condition for ending the item use scene process is satisfied (e.g., the exhibition of the effect of the item on an object or a character in the virtual space is ended), the user has performed an operation of ending the item use scene process, or the like.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not to execute a catch determination process (step S**155**). For example, if it is time to perform catch determination after the end of the movement of the thrown catching item in the virtual space, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**155** is positive. If the processor **81** determines to execute the catch determination process, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**156**. Otherwise, if it is not time to execute the catch determination process or an item other than catching items has been thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**156**, the processor **81** executes the catch determination process, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** determines whether or not a field character FC is successfully caught, based on the type of the thrown catching item, whether or not the thrown catching item has hit the field character FC, the state of the field character FC, and the like.

Next, in the catch determination process of step S**156**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a field character FC is successfully caught (step S**157**). If a field character FC is successfully caught, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**158**. Otherwise, if a field character FC is not successfully caught, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**159**.

In step S**158**, the processor **81** sets a successful catch scene, sets a field character FC successfully caught in the user's possession, and ends the subroutine. For example, the processor **81** sets a successful catch scene indicating that a field character FC is put into an empty ball item B so that the field character FC is caught (see FIGS. **9** and **10**), ends the item use scene process, and ends the item use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor **81** also updates the obtained character data Dg such that the successfully caught field character FC is in the user's possession.

In step S**159**, the processor **81** sets an unsuccessful catch scene, and ends the subroutine. For example, the processor **81** sets an unsuccessful catch scene indicating that a field character FC is not put into an empty ball item B, ends the item use scene process, and ends the item use process in which the subroutine is used.

Referring back to FIG. **22**, if in step S**124**, the processor **81** determines that an item is not to be used in the current situation, the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, whether or not a fighting character is to be used in the current situation (step S**126**). If the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use a fighting character or a fighting character is being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**127**. Otherwise, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to use a fighting character and a fighting character is not being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**128**. As a non-limiting example, if an operation input for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position for throwing a fighting character (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, and the second category (second mode) has been chosen as a projectile according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**), the processor **81** determines that the user's operation indicates an instruction to use a fighting character.

In step S**127**, the processor **81** executes a first character use process, and proceeds to step S**134**. The first character use process of step S**127** will be described below with reference to FIG. **24**.

In FIG. **24**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fight process is being currently executed for a fighting character (step S**161**). For example, if a fight process of causing a fighting character and a field character to fight against each other has been started in step S**167** described below, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**161** is positive. If the fight process is not being currently executed for a fighting character, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**162**. Otherwise, if the fight process is being currently executed for a fighting character, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**174**.

In step S**162**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fighting character appearing scene process is being currently executed. For example, if the fighting character appearing scene process has been started in step S**172** described below, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**162** is positive. If the fighting character appearing scene process is not being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**163**. Otherwise, if the fighting character appearing scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**175**.

In step S**163**, the processor **81** sets a fighting character that is to be thrown by the player character PC, sets the second aiming point M2, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** looks up the operation data Da and the obtained character data Dg, chooses and sets a fighting character BC that is to be thrown, from characters possessed by the player character PC, according to an operation input of choosing a fighting character (e.g., an operation input of pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**), and sets the projectile information Im**2** (see FIGS. **11** to **16**). The processor **81** also looks up the operation data Da, sets the aiming point type to the second aiming point M**2** (see FIG. **11**), sets the location of the aiming point according to an operation input for moving the aiming point (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying a fight range in which a fight is allowed against a field character FC (step S**164**). For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the aiming point data Dj and the field character data Dc, that the second aiming point M**2** is displayed, overlaying a fight range in which a fight is allowed against a field character FC in the field character data DC disposed on the field, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**164** is positive. If the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying the fight range, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**165**. Otherwise, if the second aiming point M**2** does not overlay the fight range, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**169**.

In step S**165**, the processor **81** changes the second aiming point M**2** to the third aiming point M**3**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** changes and sets the aiming point type to the third aiming point M**3** (see FIG. **12**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fighting character is to be thrown (step S**166**). For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, that an operation of causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a fighting character (ball item Bs) (e.g., an operation of ending an operation for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**166** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that a fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**167**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that a fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**167**, the processor **81** starts a fight process of causing a fighting character to fight against a field character, and ends the subroutine. It should be noted that the processor **81** updates the aiming point data Dj such that the displayed third aiming point M**3** is removed during the start of the fight process.

In step S**169**, the processor **81** determines whether or not the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying an appearing scene range in which a fighting character can appear and perform an action other than the fight in the virtual space. For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the aiming point data Dj and the collection object data Df, that the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying a range in which an operation of collecting one of collection objects OBJ (see FIGS. **15** and **16**) disposed on the field (appearing scene) can be performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**169** is positive. If the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying the appearing scene range, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**170**. Otherwise, if the second aiming point M**2** does not overlay the appearing scene range, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**170**, the processor **81** changes the second aiming point M**2** to the fourth aiming point M**4**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** changes the aiming point type to the fourth aiming point M**4** (see FIG. **15**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fighting character is to be thrown (step S**171**). For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, that an operation of causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a fighting character (ball item Bs) (e.g., an operation of ending an operation for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**171** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that a fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**172**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that a fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**167**, the processor **81** starts executing an appearing scene process of causing a fighting character to appear in the virtual space and perform an action other than the fight, and ends the subroutine. It should be noted that the processor **81** updates the aiming point data Dj such that the displayed fourth aiming point M**4** is removed during the start of the appearing scene process.

It should be noted that when an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a fighting character with an aiming point (specifically, the second aiming point **2**) displayed out of the fight range and the appearing scene range is performed, a ball item Bs may fall or disappear in the virtual space without a fighting character BC appearing, as a non-limiting example. As another non-limiting example, a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC may be forbidden to be thrown. In that case, even when the user performs an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a ball item Bs, the first character use process may be continued with the player character PC maintained in the throwing position without the start of a scene that the player character throws a ball item Bs. Alternatively, the first character use process may be temporarily ended without the start of a scene that the player character throws a ball item Bs.

If in step S**161**, the processor **81** determines that a fight process is being currently executed, the processor **81** executes the fight process (step S**174**), and ends the subroutine. For example, in the fight process, the processor **81** sets the player character PC's action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC chosen as a projectile, at a location in the virtual space indicated by the third aiming point M**3**, sets a movement of the thrown ball item Bs in the virtual space, and sets a series of scenes that the fighting character BC appears from a location in the virtual space that the ball item Bs has reached. After displaying the series of scenes, the processor **81** causes the appearing fighting character BC to fight against a field character FC.

In the fight process, the processor **81** changes the states of the fighting character BC and the field character FC, depending on the fight against the fighting character BC, and causes a character whose state has been reduced to a predetermined threshold to lose the fight. In the fight process, the processor **81** sets the actions of the fighting character BC and/or the player character PC according to an operation input of choosing a command to control the actions of the fighting character BC and/or the player character PC. For example, if the operation data Da indicates an operation input chosen from a plurality of attack commands, the processor **81** controls the fighting character BC such that the fighting character BC performs an attack action corresponding to the attack command. If the operation data Da indicates an operation input of choosing a command to use a catching item for catching a field character FC during a fight, the processor **81** causes the player character PC to perform an action of catching the field character FC using the catching item. Thereafter, the processor **81** performs the successful-catch determination on the field character FC based on the state of the field character FC. If the result of the successful-catch determination is positive, the processor **81** sets a scene that the field character FC is caught, and sets the field character FC in the user's possession.

In the fight process of step S**161**, the processor **81**, when ending the fight process, also ends the first character use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor **81** ends the fight process, for example, if a condition for ending the fight process is satisfied (e.g., a field character against which a fighting character BC fights has been caught, or a fighting character BC has won/lost a fight), the user has performed an operation of ending the fight process, or the like.

If in step S**162**, the processor **81** determines that an appearing scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** executes the appearing scene process (step S**175**), and ends the subroutine. For example, in the appearing scene process, the processor **81** sets the player character PC's action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC chosen as a projectile, at a location in the virtual space indicated by the fourth aiming point M**4**, sets a movement of the thrown ball item Bs in the virtual space, and sets a series of scenes that the fighting character BC appears from a location in the virtual space that the ball item Bs has reached. After displaying the series of scenes, the processor **81** executes an appearing scene process of causing the appearing fighting character BC to perform a predetermined action (e.g., an action of collecting a collection object OBJ).

In the appearing scene process, the processor **81**, when ending the appearing scene process, also ends the first character use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor **81** ends the appearing scene process, for example, if a condition for ending the appearing scene process is satisfied (e.g., the predetermined action of a fighting character BC is ended), the user has performed an operation of ending the appearing scene process, or the like.

Referring back to FIG. **22**, if in step S**126**, the processor **81** determines that a fighting character is not to be used in the current situation, the processor **81** executes other processes based on the operation data Da (step S**128**), and proceeds to step S**134**. As a non-limiting example of the other processes, the processor **81** changes the place and position of the player character PC in the virtual space according to an operation input of moving the player character PC that is indicated by the operation data Da, and updates the player character data Db.

If in step S**123**, if the processor **81** determines that a boss fight event is being currently carried out, the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, whether or not a boss item is to be used in the boss fight event (step S**129**). If the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use a boss item or a boss item is being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**130**. Otherwise, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to use a boss item and a boss item is not being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**131**. As a non-limiting example, if an operation input of causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position for throwing a boss item (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, and the first category (first mode) has been chosen as a projectile by a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**), the processor **81** determines that the user's operation indicates an instruction to use a boss item. It should be noted that even in a scene in which a boss item is used, if the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use a fighting character, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**129** is negative.

In step S**130**, the processor **81** executes a boss item use process, and proceeds to step S**134**. The boss item use process of step S**130** will be described below with reference to FIG. **25**.

In FIG. **25**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a boss item use scene process is being currently executed (step S**180**). For example, if the boss item use scene process has been started in step S**183** described below, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**180** is positive. If the boss item use scene process is not being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**181**. Otherwise, if the boss item use scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**188**.

In step S**181**, the processor **81** sets a boss item that is to be thrown by the player character PC, sets the first aiming point M**1**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** looks up the operation data Da and the item data Di, chooses and sets a boss item that is to be thrown, from items possessed by the player character PC, according to an operation input of choosing a boss item (e.g., an operation input of pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**), and sets the projectile information Im**3** (see FIG. **18**). The processor **81** also looks up the operation data Da, sets the aiming point type to the first aiming point M**1** (see FIG. **18**), sets the location of the aiming point according to an operation input for moving the aiming point (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not the boss item is to be thrown (step S**182**). For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, that an operation of causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing the boss item (e.g., an operation of ending an operation for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**182** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that the boss item is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**183**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that the boss item is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**184**.

In step S**183**, the processor **81** starts a boss item use scene process of causing the player character PC to throw the boss item, and proceeds to step S**184**.

In step S**184**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fighting character BC can appear so as to fight against the boss character MC in the current situation. For example, if the boss character MC is in a predetermined state, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**184** is positive. If a fighting character BC can appear in the current situation, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**185**. Otherwise, if a fighting character BC cannot appear in the current situation, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**186**.

In step S**185**, the processor **81** sets the character fight flag on, updates the character fight flag data Dm, and proceeds to step S**186**.

In step S**186**, the processor **81** determines whether or not to end the boss fight event. The boss fight event is ended, for example, if a condition for ending the boss fight event is satisfied (e.g., a boss state parameter (see the gauge G**2** of FIG. **18**) has reached a threshold, the boss character MC has won/lost a fight against the player character PC in the event, or the event period has expired), the user has performed an operation of ending the boss fight event, or the like. If the processor **81** determines to end the boss fight event, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**187**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine to end the boss fight event, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S**187**, the processor **81** executes a boss fight event end process, and ends the subroutine. For example, the processor **81** executes the boss fight event end process by ending the boss item use process, and setting a scene that the boss character MC has won/lost a fight against the player character PC, or the like.

If in step S**180**, the processor determines that the boss item use scene process is being currently executed, the processor **81** executes the boss item use scene process (step S**188**), and proceeds to step S**186**. For example, in the boss item use scene process, the processor **81** sets the player character PC's action of throwing a boss item chosen as a projectile at a location in the virtual space indicated by the first aiming point M**1**, and sets a movement action of the thrown boss item in the virtual space.

In the boss item use scene process, after the end of the scene that the boss item is thrown, the processor **81** sets the effect of the boss item at a location where the boss item has reached. For example, the processor **81** determines what kind of effect is exhibited by throwing the boss item, based on the type of the boss item, the location where the thrown boss item has reached, the site of the boss character MC that the thrown boss item has hit, the state of the boss character MC at which the boss item has been thrown, and the like. Thereafter, based on the determined effect of the boss item, the processor **81** changes the boss character MC or the target in the virtual space at which the item has been thrown. As a non-limiting example, when the boss item hits the boss character MC, the processor **81** changes a state (e.g., the boss state parameter) of the boss character MC based on the determined effect of the boss item, and updates the boss character data Dd.

It should be noted that in the boss item use scene process, the processor **81**, when ending the boss item use scene process, updates the aiming point data Dj such that the displayed first aiming point M**1** is removed, and ends the boss item use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor **81** ends the boss item use scene process, for example, if a condition for ending the boss item use scene process is satisfied (e.g., the exhibition of the effect of the boss item on the boss character MC in the virtual space is ended), the user has performed an operation of ending the boss item use scene process, or the like.

Referring back to FIG. **22**, if in step S**129**, the processor **81** determines that a boss item is not to be used in the current situation, the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, whether or not a fighting character is to be used in the current situation (step S**131**). If the operation data Da indicates an instruction to use a fighting character or that a fighting character is being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**132**. Otherwise, if the operation data Da does not indicate an instruction to use a fighting character and a fighting character is not being used in the current scene, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**133**. As a non-limiting example, if an operation input for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position for throwing a fighting character (e.g., pressing down the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, and the second category (second mode) has been chosen as a projectile according to a predetermined operation input (e.g., pressing down the operation button (X button) **55**), the processor **81** determines that the user's operation indicates an instruction to use a fighting character.

In step S**132**, the processor **81** executes a second character use process, and proceeds to step S**134**. The second character use process of step S**132** will be described below with reference to FIG. **26**.

In FIG. **26**, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fight process between a fighting character and a boss character is being currently executed (step S**191**). For example, if a boss fight process of causing a fighting character and a boss character to fight against each other has been started in step S**197** described below, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**191** is positive. If a fight process between a fighting character and a boss character is not being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**192**. Otherwise, if a fight process between a fighting character and a boss character is being currently executed, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**198**.

In step S**192**, the processor **81** sets a fighting character that is to be thrown by the player character PC, sets the second aiming point M**2**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** looks up the operation data Da and the obtained character data Dg, chooses and sets a fighting character BC that is to be thrown, from characters possessed by the player character PC, according to an operation input of choosing a fighting character (e.g., an operation input of pressing down the operation button (L button) **38** or the operation button (R button) **60**), and sets the projectile information Im**2** (see FIGS. **19** and **20**). The processor **81** also looks up the operation data Da, sets the aiming point type to the second aiming point M**2**, sets the location of the aiming point according to an operation input for moving the aiming point (e.g., the direction of inclination of the analog stick **32** or **52**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** looks up the character fight flag data Dm, and determines whether or not the character fight flag is on (step S**193**). If the character fight flag is on, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**194**. Otherwise, if the character fight flag is off, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**200**.

In step S**194**, the processor **81** determines whether or not the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying a fight range in which a fight is allowed between the boss character MC and a fighting character BC. For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the aiming point data Dj and the boss character data Dd, that the second aiming point M**2** is displayed, overlaying a fight range in which a fight is allowed against the boss character MC, which is disposed on the field, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**194** is positive. If the second aiming point M**2** is disposed, overlaying the fight range, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**195**. Otherwise, if the second aiming point M**2** does not overlay the fight range, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**200**.

In step S**194**, the processor **81** changes the second aiming point M**2** to the third aiming point M**3**, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor **81** changes the aiming point type to the third aiming point M**3** (see FIG. **19**), and updates the aiming point data Dj.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not a fighting character is to be thrown (step S**196**). For example, if the processor **81** determines, based on the operation data Da, that an operation of causing the player character PC to perform an action of throwing a fighting character (ball item Bs) (e.g., an operation of ending an operation for causing the player character PC to get into a throwing position, and as a non-limiting example, an operation of releasing the operation button (ZR button) **61**) has been performed, the result of the determination by the processor **81** in step S**196** is positive. If the processor **81** determines that the fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** proceeds to step S**197**. Otherwise, if the processor **81** does not determine that the fighting character is to be thrown, the processor **81** ends the subroutine.

In step S197, the processor 81 starts a fight process of causing the fighting character to fight against the boss character, and proceeds to step S200. It should be noted that the processor 81 updates the aiming point data Dj such that the displayed third aiming point M3 is removed during the start of the boss fight process.

It should be noted that in the present non-limiting example, the fight range in which a fight is allowed between the boss character MC and a fighting character BC may not be set. In that case, the second aiming point M2 is changed to the third aiming point M3 irrespective of where the second aiming point M2 is disposed. In addition, after that change, no matter where the third aiming point M3 is disposed, the boss fight process of causing a fighting character BC to fight against the boss character MC can be started by causing the player character PC to throw the fighting character BC.

If in step S191, the processor 81 determines that a fight process is being currently executed, the processor 81 executes the boss fight process (step S198), and proceeds to step S200. For example, in the boss fight process, the processor 81 sets the player character PC's action of throwing a ball item Bs containing a fighting character BC chosen as a projectile, at a location in the virtual space indicated by the third aiming point M3, sets a movement of the thrown ball item Bs in the virtual space, and sets a series of scenes that the fighting character BC appears from a location in the virtual space that the ball item Bs has reached. After displaying the series of scenes, the processor 81 executes a process of causing the appearing fighting character BC to fight against the boss character MC.

In the boss fight process, the processor 81 changes the states of the fighting character BC and the boss character MC, depending on the fight against the fighting character BC, and causes a character whose state has been reduced to a predetermined threshold to lose the fight. In the boss fight process, the processor 81 sets the actions of the fighting character BC and/or the player character PC according to an operation input of choosing a command to control the actions of the fighting character BC and/or the player character PC. For example, if the operation data Da indicates an operation input chosen from a plurality of attack commands, the processor 81 controls the fighting character BC such that the fighting character BC performs an attack action corresponding to the attack command.

In the boss fight process of step S198, the processor 81, when ending the boss fight process, also ends the second character use process in which the subroutine is used. The processor 81 ends the boss fight process, for example, if a condition for ending the boss fight process is satisfied (e.g., the boss character MC has won/lost a fight against a fighting character BC), the user has performed an operation of ending the boss fight process, or the like. It should be noted that when a fighting character BC wins the boss character MC in a fight between the boss character MC and the fighting character BC, the processor 81 adjusts a condition for clearing the boss fight event such that the condition is more easily satisfied, for example, by setting a limitation on the movement of the boss character MC in the virtual space for at least a predetermined period of time immediately after the fighting character BC wins a fight against the boss character MC, as a non-limiting example.

In step S200, the processor 81 determines whether or not to end the boss fight event. The boss fight event is ended, for example, if a condition for ending the boss fight event is satisfied (e.g., the boss character MC has won/lost a fight against the player character PC in the fight, or the event period has expired), the user has performed an operation of ending the boss fight event, or the like. If the processor 81 determines to end the boss fight event, the processor 81 proceeds to step S201. Otherwise, if the processor 81 does not determine to end the boss fight event, the processor 81 ends the subroutine.

In step S201, the processor 81 executes a boss fight event end process, and ends the subroutine. For example, the processor 81 executes the boss fight event end process by ending the second character use process, and setting a scene that the boss character MC has won/lost a fight against the player character PC, or the like.

Referring back to FIG. 22, if in step S131, the processor 81 determines that a fighting character is not to be used in the current situation, the processor 81 executes other processes based on the operation data Da (step S133), and proceeds to step S134. As a non-limiting example of the other processes, the processor 81 changes the place and position of the player character PC in the virtual space according to an operation input of moving the player character PC that is indicated by the operation data Da, and updates the player character data Db. It should be noted that if the condition for ending the boss fight event is satisfied in step S128, the processor 81 executes the boss fight event end process.

In step S134, the processor 81 executes a character action process, and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor 81 sets, based on the results of the processes of steps S122 to S133, the actions in the virtual space of the player character PC, the fighting character BC, the field character FC, the boss character MC, and the like, and the remaining amount of each gauge. As a non-limiting example, the processor 81 sets the place, position, action, state, and the like of each character and the remaining amount of each gauge, based on the settings and the progress of the set scene in steps S122 to S133, an algorithm for automatically controlling the action of each character, a virtual physical calculation in the virtual space, an operation input indicated by the operation data Da, and the like, and updates the player character data Db, the field character data Dc, the boss character data Dd, and the fighting character data De. As another non-limiting example, when an in-game event such as the boss fight event or an in-game mission is started based on the progression of a game or an operation input indicated by the operation data Da, the processor 81 causes an associated character to appear in the virtual space during the start of the event or the like, sets the place, position, movement, state, and the like of the character, and the remaining amount of each gauge, and updates data of each character.

Next, the processor 81 executes a display control process (step S135), and proceeds to the next step. For example, the processor 81 disposes each character, object, gauge, item, and the like in the virtual space based on the results of the processes of steps S122 to S134, data related to each character, object, and item, and the like. The processor 81 also sets the location and orientation of the virtual camera based on the operation data Da and the place and position of the player character PC, and generates and displays an image of the virtual space as viewed from the virtual camera on the display 12. The processor 81 also displays, on the display 12, an aiming point and/or catch information, which overlay the image of the virtual space, based on the aiming point data Dj and the catch information data Dk. It should be noted that the aiming point and/or catch information may be disposed in the virtual space, and may be displayed as a portion of the image of the virtual space as viewed from the virtual camera.

In the pictorial representation scene, the processor **81** displays, on the display **12**, the pictorial representation image set in step S**146**.

Next, the processor **81** determines whether or not to end the game process (step S**136**). The game process in step S**136** is ended, for example, if a condition for ending the game process is satisfied, the user has performed an operation of ending the game process, or the like. If the processor **81** does not determine to end the game process, the processor **81** returns to and repeats step S**122**. If the processor **81** determines to end the game process, the processor **81** ends the process of the flowchart. Thereafter, steps S**122** to S**136** are repeatedly executed until the processor **81** determines to end the game process in step S**136**.

Thus, in the present non-limiting example, the player character PC can be caused to perform different actions in different modes, i.e., switch between the first and second modes. In the first mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching an item for affecting a field character FC or the boss character MC as a target on the field, at the field character FC or the boss character MC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M. In the second mode, the player character PC is caused to perform an action of launching a fighting character BC that is to fight against a field character FC or the boss character MC on a field, at the field character FC or the boss character MC, according to an operation input for causing the player character PC to perform a launching action in the direction indicated by an aiming point M.

Although in the above non-limiting example, non-limiting examples of an operation input for executing each process has been described, the operation input is not limited to the above non-limiting example. In the present non-limiting example, in addition to operations using the operation buttons or sticks, a touch operation of using the touch panel **13**, an operation of using the motion or orientation of the main body apparatus **2**, an operation of using the motion or orientation of the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, a pointing operation of using the body of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, and the like, may be used as the operation input.

Although in the above non-limiting example, a player character launches an item or character in the direction indicated by an aiming point in the virtual space by performing a throwing action, a player character launches an item or character by performing other actions. For example, a player character may launch an item or character in the virtual space in the direction indicated by at an aiming point by performing a kicking action, a pushing action, a blowing action, a shooting action (firing, projecting, radiating, irradiating, etc.), a punching action, or the like.

In the above non-limiting example, the effect of a certain type of item is obtained when the item hits a target such as a field character FC, the boss character MC, or a collection object OBJ. The effect of such an item may be obtained when the item reaches a range formed in the vicinity of the target irrespective of whether the item hits the target. Conversely, in the above non-limiting example, the effect of another type of item is obtained when the item reaches a range formed in the vicinity of a target. The effect of such an item may be obtained when the item hits the target. Concerning the process of locking an aiming point on to one of field characters FC according to an operation input, an aiming point may be locked on to the boss character MC in the boss fight event according to the same operation input.

In the above non-limiting example, a gauge G (the gauges G**1** to G**3**) is used to indicate a state of a field character FC or the boss character MC. The gauges G may indicate any parameter that causes progression of an in-game mission or an in-game event. For example, a parameter that causes progression of an in-game mission or an in-game event may indicate the emotions, endurance, remaining physical strength, action state, life value, or the like of a character.

In the above non-limiting example, it is assumed that an in-game event or an in-game mission is seamless throughout a game, and is played on a field in the same virtual space. However, in the present non-limiting example, even in the case where a game is played on a field in the same virtual space, different scenes may be provided in different events or missions.

The game system **1** may be any suitable apparatus, including a handheld game apparatus, or any suitable handheld electronic apparatus (a personal digital assistant (PDA), mobile telephone, personal computer, camera, tablet computer, etc.), etc. In that case, an input apparatus for performing an operation of causing a player character PC or a fighting character BC to perform an action may be, instead of the left controller **3** or the right controller **4**, another controller, mouse, touchpad, touch panel, trackball, keyboard, directional pad, slidepad, etc.

In the foregoing, the information processes (game processes) are performed in the game system **1**. Alternatively, at least a portion of the process steps may be performed in another apparatus. For example, when the game system **1** can also communicate with another apparatus (e.g., a server, another information processing apparatus, another image display apparatus, another game apparatus, another mobile terminal, etc.), the process steps may be executed in cooperation with the second apparatus. By thus causing another apparatus to perform a portion of the process steps, a process similar to the above process can be performed. The above information process may be executed by a single processor or a plurality of cooperating processors included in an information processing system including at least one information processing apparatus. In the above non-limiting example, the information processes can be performed by the processor **81** of the game system **1** executing predetermined programs. Alternatively, all or a portion of the above processes may be performed by a dedicated circuit included in the game system **1**.

Here, according to the above non-limiting variation, the present non-limiting example can be implanted in a so-called cloud computing system form or distributed wide-area and local-area network system forms. For example, in a distributed local-area network system, the above process can be executed by cooperation between a stationary information processing apparatus (a stationary game apparatus) and a mobile information processing apparatus (handheld game apparatus). It should be noted that, in these system forms, each of the above steps may be performed by substantially any of the apparatuses, and the present non-limiting example may be implemented by assigning the steps to the apparatuses in substantially any manner.

The order of steps, setting values, conditions for determination, etc., used in the above information process are merely illustrative, and of course, other order of steps, setting values, conditions for determination, etc., may be used to implement the present non-limiting example.

The above programs may be supplied to the game system **1** not only through an external storage medium, such as an external memory, but also through a wired or wireless communication line. The program may be previously stored in a non-volatile storage device in the game system **1**. Examples of an information storage medium storing the program include non-volatile memories, and in addition, CD-ROMs, DVDs, optical disc-like storage media similar thereto, and flexible disks, hard disks, magneto-optical disks, and magnetic tapes. The information storage medium storing the program may be a volatile memory storing the program. Such a storage medium may be said as a storage medium that can be read by a computer, etc. (computer-readable storage medium, etc.). For example, the above various functions can be provided by causing a computer, etc., to read and execute programs from these storage media.

While several non-limiting example systems, methods, devices, and apparatuses have been described above in detail, the foregoing description is in all aspects illustrative and not restrictive. It should be understood that numerous other modifications and variations can be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the appended claims. It is, therefore, intended that the scope of the present technology is limited only by the appended claims and equivalents thereof. It should be understood that those skilled in the art could carry out the literal and equivalent scope of the appended claims based on the description of the present non-limiting example and common technical knowledge. It should be understood throughout the present specification that expression of a singular form includes the concept of its plurality unless otherwise mentioned. Specifically, articles or adjectives for a singular form (e.g., “a,” “an,” “the,” etc., in English) include the concept of their plurality unless otherwise mentioned. It should also be understood that the terms as used herein have definitions typically used in the art unless otherwise mentioned. Thus, unless otherwise defined, all scientific and technical terms have the same meanings as those generally used by those skilled in the art to which the present non-limiting example pertain. If there is any inconsistency or conflict, the present specification (including the definitions) shall prevail.

As described above, the present non-limiting example is applicable as a game program, game system, game apparatus, game processing method, and the like that are capable of causing a player character to perform various actions on a field in a virtual space.

What is claimed is:

**1**. A method for game processing implemented via an information processing system having at least one processor, the method comprising:

generating data for display of a player character and a first virtual character disposed in a virtual space;

determining an aiming direction based on a direction input; and

in association with the player character performing a first game action:

generating data for display of a first aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generating data for display of an indicator indicating a likelihood of success of the player character obtaining the first virtual character;

selecting an obtaining item, from a plurality of obtaining items, by performing a first operation input;

generating data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, the obtaining item for obtaining the first virtual character in the virtual space, based on a second operation input;

determining obtaining of the first virtual character, by the player character, as successful in association with the obtaining item arriving within a vicinity of the first virtual character; and

generating data for display of setting the first virtual character as being in possession by the player character in association with determining the first virtual character as successfully obtained, and

in association with the player character performing a second game action:

generating data for display of a second aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generating data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, a first virtual object representing the obtained first virtual character, based on a third operation input; and

generating data for display of the first virtual character and a second virtual character starting fighting against each other in the virtual space.

**2**. The method of claim **1**, wherein launching the obtaining item includes the player character throwing the obtaining item.

**3**. The method of claim **1**, wherein obtaining the virtual character is determined as successful in association with the obtaining item making contact with the virtual character in the virtual space.

**4**. The method of claim **1**, wherein the first virtual character is a field character and the second virtual character is a fighting character.

**5**. The method of claim **1**, wherein a lock-on operation, for locking on to the first virtual character, is performed in association with the first aiming direction.

**6**. The method of claim **1**, wherein the likelihood of success corresponds to a health level of the first virtual character.

**7**. The method of claim **1**, wherein health information is displayed in association with the first virtual character.

**8**. A system, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory configured to store computer readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the system to:

generate data for display of a player character and a first virtual character disposed in a virtual space;

determine an aiming direction based on a direction input;

in association with the player character performing a first game action:

generate data for display of a first aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generate data for display of an indicator indicating a likelihood of success of the player character obtaining the first virtual character;

select an obtaining item, from a plurality of obtaining items, by performing a first operation input;

generate data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, the obtaining item for obtaining the first virtual character in the virtual space, based on a second operation input;

determine obtaining of the first virtual character, by the player character, as successful in association with, at least, the obtaining item arriving within a vicinity of the first virtual character; and

generate data for display of setting the first virtual character as being in possession by the player character in association with determining the first virtual character as successfully obtained, and

in association with the player character performing a second game action:

generate data for display of a second aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generate data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, a first virtual object representing the obtained first virtual character, based on a third operation input; and

generate data for display of the first virtual character and a second virtual character starting fighting against each other in the virtual space.

**9**. A non-transitory computer readable storage medium having stored therein a game program that, when executed by a computer of an information processing apparatus, causes the computer to perform operations comprising:

generating data for display of a player character and a first virtual character disposed in a virtual space;

determining an aiming direction based on a direction input; and

in association with the player character performing a first game action:

generating data for display of a first aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generating data for display of an indicator indicating a likelihood of success of the player character obtaining the first virtual character;

selecting an obtaining item, from a plurality of obtaining items, by performing a first operation input;

generating data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, the obtaining item for obtaining the first virtual character in the virtual space, based on a second operation input;

determining obtaining of the first virtual character, by the player character, as successful in association with the obtaining item arriving within a vicinity of the first virtual character; and

generating data for display of setting the first virtual character as being in possession by the player character in association with determining the first virtual character as successfully obtained, and

in association with the player character performing a second game action:

generating data for display of a second aiming point associated with the aiming direction;

generating data for display of the player character launching, in the aiming direction, a first virtual object representing the obtained first virtual character, based on a third operation input; and

generating data for display of the first virtual character and a second virtual character starting fighting against each other in the virtual space.

**10**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein launching the obtaining item includes the player character throwing the obtaining item.

**11**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein obtaining the virtual character is determined as successful in association with the obtaining item making contact with the virtual character in the virtual space.

**12**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein the first virtual character is a field character and the second virtual character is a fighting character.

**13**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein a lock-on operation, for locking on to the first virtual character, is performed in association with the first aiming direction.

**14**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein the likelihood of success corresponds to a health level of the first virtual character.

**15**. The non-transitory computer-readable storage medium according to claim **9**, wherein health information is displayed in association with the first virtual character.

**16**. The method of claim **1**, wherein obtaining the virtual character is determined as successful in association with the obtaining item hitting the virtual character in the virtual space.

**17**. The system of claim **8**, wherein obtaining the virtual character is determined as successful in association with the obtaining item making contact with the virtual character in the virtual space.

**18**. The system of claim **8**, wherein a lock-on operation, for locking on to the first virtual character, is performed in association with the first aiming direction.

**19**. The system of claim **8**, wherein the likelihood of success corresponds to a health level of the first virtual character.

**20**. The system of claim **8**, wherein health information is displayed in association with the first virtual character.

* * * * *