

## **Abstract**

***Gotta' Learn 'Em All:***

### ***Motivation and Vocabulary Acquisition in Language Learners' Playing of Computer Games in the Target Language***

**M.Sc. Interactive Digital Media Research Paper**

**Trinity College, University of Dublin**

**Conor Sneyd**

This research Paper examines the use of computer games for foreign language learning, exploring learners' motivation to play computer games in the target language. The paper begins with a literature review of relevant theories and studies related to computer games, motivation and language learning, and notes that much of the literature assumes learners are interested in learning languages for pragmatic purposes, such as practical communication or in order to pass tests. However the paper also notes that more modern research has shown that some learners, particularly learners of Japanese, may be more interested in learning a language in order to consume cultural products in the language than they are interested in learning the language for practical use. Following on from these observations, the paper asks the question of whether language learners who play games in the target language are ultimately playing games in order to learn the language, or learning the language in order to play games. A survey was designed to attempt to confirm that a desire to consume cultural products in the target language is a significant motivating factor for some learners of Japanese as a foreign language, and then to examine the relationship between learners' motivation to play games and to improve their language abilities. The survey focuses specifically on vocabulary acquisition, as this area of language learning is highlighted in the literature on using games for learning. The results of the survey are too broad to conclusively answer the question of whether language learners who play computer games in the target language are ultimately playing games to learn the language or learning the language to play games. However the results do suggest that motivation varies widely among learners, and that while some are primarily playing games to learn language, others are learning language to play games, and many are doing both simultaneously in a continuous cycle.