

Japanese language inspires student to develop unique computer game

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University of Derby student Jitesh Rawal

A love of Japanese culture has inspired a University of Derby student to design a computer game which teaches the language to gamers as they play.

Jitesh Rawal, 22, who studies BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming, wanted to create a Japanese role-play game (JRPG) that teaches the [language](#) but with entertaining gameplay at the forefront.

Called Koe (pronounced Ko-eh and means 'voice'), it begins in a Japanese airport, but quickly leads into a fantasy world of two-headed dragons and purple octopuses. Japanese culture is right at the heart of the game, meaning users can learn the language in the right context.

Once all development is complete, the game, which is heavily influenced by conventional JRPGs such as Dragon Quest, Pokemon and Final Fantasy will be released for Windows, Mac OSX and Linux.

Jitesh, from Leicester, said: "I always had the idea of a game that teaches language, but it had been largely done before. However, instead of being quite boring and simply about learning language, I wanted to focus on gameplay.

"People learn the language by using various 'items' throughout the game. All items are basically Japanese words that are initially taught using communicative language teaching techniques, basically 'learning by doing'.

"The user is given Japanese words from various sources and those words are used as moves in battle. The game helps the user as they play and there are plenty of English prompts."

Jitesh says he is sure the game will help people to learn the basics of the Japanese language. He said: "My dissertation on [language acquisition](#) has helped me to build my knowledge of techniques which help people to learn new languages. Those techniques are built into Koe."

Now in his final year, Jitesh plans to graduate before putting all his energy into getting Koe onto the shelves of computer games stores in PlayStation 4, Wii U and Xbox One format.

And he has raised more than £45,000 through small investments on

pledge-based website Kickstarter, which will pay for an art overhaul from 3D design and games programmer Dan Tsukasa, as well as a soundtrack and voice acting from native Japanese speakers.

It will also cover software licenses, translation into other languages and a PlayStation Vita version.

Jitesh, who developed three games during his course's placement year with Pillowdrift Games last year, wants to return to education at some point to do a Masters degree in Linguistics and Language Acquisition.

He said: "I want to continue my studies. I have been very impressed with the teaching at the University of Derby as the lecturers here really know their stuff. I knew this was the right place for me to study Computer Games Programming."

More information: Jitesh's Kickstarter page:
[www.kickstarter.com/projects/2 ... ay?ref=home_location](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/2...ay?ref=home_location)

Provided by University of Derby

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