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FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN TOURISM STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: GAMIFICATION AS A TOOL FOR ENGAGEMENT

Abstract. This study explores the impact of gamification on foreign language learning for tourism students. The study involved 42 second-year tourism students enrolled in a foreign language course.

Data were collected using pre- and post-tests, surveys, interviews, and observations. Students participated in gamified lessons that included role-playing, simulations, quizzes, and group projects. To assess the effectiveness of gamification, tests were administered before and after the lessons, while surveys measured students' motivation, engagement, and perceptions of the experience.

Data analysis was conducted using ANOVA, which showed statistically significant improvements in language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and speaking fluency. The results indicated that gamification significantly increased students' motivation (85%), made learning more enjoyable (75%), and improved material retention (70%). Language proficiency improved by 15% compared to pre-test scores. These findings support the effectiveness of gamification in foreign language learning, especially within the context of tourism education.

Keywords: gamification, foreign language learning, tourism students, motivation, engagement, language proficiency.

Introduction

In recent years, gamification has emerged as a powerful tool in education, especially in the field of foreign language learning. For tourism students, learning a foreign language is not just about mastering grammar and vocabulary but also about understanding cultural nuances and effectively communicating with diverse groups of people. Traditional teaching methods can sometimes fail to keep students motivated, which is where gamification comes in, offering an innovative way to make learning both engaging and enjoyable.

Gamification involves incorporating game-like elements, such as rewards, challenges, and

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competition, into non-game settings like classrooms. By using elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards, educators can tap into students' natural desires for achievement and recognition. This approach has shown to not only increase student motivation but also improve engagement and retention of language skills, which are crucial for tourism students who need to be proficient in foreign languages for their future careers.

This paper explores the role of gamification in enhancing the foreign language acquisition of tourism students. It will discuss how gamified learning can foster creativity, boost motivation, and ultimately lead to better language proficiency. By looking at existing studies and examples, the paper will offer insights into how teachers can effectively use gamification in language classrooms to create more dynamic and interactive learning experiences for their students.

In doing so, this study aims to highlight how gamification can transform language learning from a tedious task into an exciting, creative experience, equipping tourism students with the skills they need to succeed in a globalized world.

Literature Review

The Importance of Language Skills in the Tourism Industry

In the tourism industry, language skills are crucial for effective communication between tourists and professionals, fostering cultural understanding, and enhancing service quality. Language proficiency helps tourism workers better serve a diverse clientele, making interactions more pleasant and efficient. This is especially important in global tourism, where visitors come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

For tourism professionals, the ability to speak multiple languages opens up greater career opportunities, particularly in roles requiring direct customer interaction, such as hotel management, tour guiding, and travel consulting. Language skills allow professionals to connect with tourists on a deeper level, making their experiences more enjoyable and personalized. Moreover, in today's competitive global tourism market, multilingualism provides a competitive edge, allowing businesses to attract a broader audience.

As the tourism industry continues to grow, the demand for language skills becomes even more critical. Being able to communicate in multiple languages is no longer just an advantage; it's often a requirement. This ability not only helps professionals advance in their careers but also improves the tourism experience for visitors, contributing to the success and growth of the industry.

Approaches to Language Learning in Tourism Education

Given the importance of language skills in tourism, it's essential to explore how to effectively teach languages to students in this field. Traditional classroom-based learning can be valuable but often lacks the engagement and practical application necessary for students to develop proficiency. To address this gap, many educators are turning to innovative teaching methods, one of which is gamification.

Gamification has been shown to be an effective tool for increasing student engagement and motivation. Anderson and Dill [1] explore how video games can positively influence cognitive development, which can be applied to language learning. Video games are immersive and interactive, providing students with a simulated environment where they can practice language skills in real-life scenarios. This approach encourages active learning, which is key for language acquisition.

Gee [2] supports this idea by highlighting that video games offer unique learning experiences through problem-solving and interaction, allowing students to practice language skills in a dynamic, context-rich environment. Such games encourage learners to learn by doing, which is particularly

beneficial for language learners who need to apply their knowledge in real-world settings.

Beyond video games, gamification as a broader concept has also been explored in educational contexts. Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa [3] conducted a literature review that shows how incorporating game elements, such as rewards and challenges, into educational activities can enhance student engagement and performance. For tourism students, adding gamified elements to language learning can keep them motivated and provide an enjoyable, interactive way to practice language skills.

Deterding et al. [4] explore the design principles behind gamification, identifying key elements like points, badges, and leaderboards, which can be used to motivate students. These elements can be adapted to language learning, where students earn rewards for mastering vocabulary, completing tasks, or engaging in language activities. By using these principles, educators can make language learning more engaging and rewarding for tourism students, encouraging them to actively participate in their education.

Xu, Wei, and Chen [5] specifically examine how gamification can enhance foreign language learning, arguing that it increases motivation and participation. In the tourism field, where language skills are essential, gamified language learning offers a more interactive way for students to engage with and practice the language. This approach meets the needs of tourism students, who benefit from language learning that is both practical and enjoyable.

Surendeleg, Kim, and Yoon [6] further support the idea that gamification positively impacts student performance, particularly in terms of motivation and engagement. They argue that gamified learning transforms passive learners into active participants, which is essential for language acquisition. For tourism students, this active participation can significantly improve their ability to use the language effectively in real-world scenarios, such as interacting with international tourists or working in hospitality settings.

Motivation and Engagement in Language Learning

Motivation plays a crucial role in language acquisition, particularly in fields like tourism, where practical language use is key. Sailer et al. [7] explore how various game elements impact intrinsic motivation. Their study shows that features like challenges, rewards, and narratives help boost student engagement. For tourism students, who need to master languages to communicate with tourists effectively, these elements can make learning more engaging and relevant to real-world applications.

Caponetto, Holthoff, and Schwarzer [10] examine how gamification influences motivation in language learning, emphasizing that it significantly increases student interest and participation. Their findings reinforce the idea that gamification makes language learning more enjoyable and meaningful, which is especially important for tourism students who need to be motivated to learn a language they will use in their professional lives.

Research Objective and Hypothesis

This study aims to explore how gamification can enhance the foreign language learning experience for tourism students. Specifically, it will investigate how incorporating game-like elements such as rewards, challenges, and interactive tasks can increase student motivation and improve language proficiency. The research will examine how these gamified elements can make language learning more engaging and effective, preparing students for real-world communication in the tourism industry.

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that incorporating gamified elements into foreign language learning for tourism students will significantly enhance student motivation, increase engagement,

and improve language proficiency compared to traditional learning methods. By making language learning more interactive and enjoyable, gamification is expected to provide a more effective learning experience, better preparing students for practical language use in the tourism industry.

The goal of this study is to either confirm or refute this hypothesis, providing valuable insights into the potential of gamification as a tool for improving language acquisition and enhancing the skills that tourism students need to succeed in an increasingly globalized job market.

Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to explore the impact of gamification on language learning for tourism students. By combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, we aim to get a complete picture of how gamified elements influence student motivation, engagement, and language skills. The quantitative data will give us measurable outcomes on performance, while the qualitative data will provide a deeper understanding of how students feel about their learning experiences.

The participants in this study are 42 second-year tourism students, including 22 females and 20 males, all enrolled in a foreign language course that is required for their program. This mix of genders and cultural backgrounds gives us a diverse group of learners, which helps us see how gamification might affect different types of students. All participants have a foundational level of the foreign language they're studying, ensuring a level playing field.

The gamified language lessons are designed to be interactive and engaging, making learning more dynamic. The lesson structure includes different activities like role-playing, simulations, quizzes, and group projects, which are all meant to challenge students while keeping them motivated. For example, students may be tasked with designing a tour package for international tourists, using the target language to solve real-world problems. They'll also participate in a quiz, answer questions related to what they've learned, and work in teams to prepare a presentation about a new tourist attraction. The lesson ends with a debriefing, where students reflect on the experience and discuss how the gamified activities helped them engage with the language.

To measure the effectiveness of gamification, we will use a combination of tests, surveys, interviews, and observations. A language proficiency test will be given to students before and after the gamified sessions to track improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and language usage. These results will be analyzed to see if gamification leads to measurable improvements in language skills.

Data Analysis with ANOVA. To analyze the results, we'll use ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to see if there are any significant changes in students' language proficiency before and after the gamified lessons. This statistical method will help us determine if the improvements in language skills are truly due to the gamified approach or if they might be explained by other factors. We'll also apply ANOVA to survey responses to see if gamification affected motivation, engagement, and retention differently for male and female students.

In addition to the tests, we'll gather feedback through surveys and interviews. The surveys will ask students how engaged they were with the gamified activities, how motivated they felt, and how much more enjoyable the experience was compared to traditional learning. We'll also include open-ended questions so students can reflect on their personal experiences. A smaller group of students will be interviewed in more detail to explore how the gamified approach influenced their learning.

Finally, classroom observations will be conducted to see how students engage with the gamified content in real time. The instructor will note how students interact with each other, how much effort they put into the activities, and how the gamified approach changes the classroom

atmosphere. This will help us understand how gamification influences student behavior beyond just test scores.

Results and Discussion

Data Processing

The data collected for this study was analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative methods. This dual approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how gamification impacted the students' language learning experience. Quantitative data, primarily drawn from pre-test and post-test scores, was used to assess the improvement in students' language proficiency. These tests focused on key language skills such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar usage, and speaking fluency. The pre-test scores provided a baseline, while the post-test scores enabled us to measure the effects of the gamified learning activities.

In addition to the tests, we also collected survey data that captured students' levels of engagement, motivation, and their perceptions of gamification. These surveys included Likert-scale questions that asked students to rate their experiences, as well as open-ended questions to gather more detailed feedback. The qualitative aspect of the study involved interviews with a selected group of students. These interviews gave us an opportunity to explore the personal experiences of students with gamified learning, helping to contextualize the survey findings and provide richer insights into their perceptions.

The data from both the surveys and the interviews were then aggregated and analyzed. Statistical analysis was performed to evaluate the significance of the differences in pre-test and post-test scores, as well as to identify correlations between the gamified elements of the lessons and improvements in language skills.

ANOVA Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison

To analyze the language proficiency data, an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant improvements between the pre-test and post-test scores. The results, presented in Table 1, indicate that all three language skills—vocabulary acquisition, grammar usage, and speaking fluency—showed significant improvement after the gamified learning sessions.

Table 1 – ANOVA Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison of Language Skills

Language Skill	F-Statistic	p-Value	Conclusion
Vocabulary Acquisition	5.12	0.03	Significant Improvement
Grammar Usage	4.95	0.04	Significant Improvement
Speaking Fluency	6.21	0.02	Significant Improvement

Note: The F-statistics and p-values indicate significant improvements in all language skills, with p-values less than 0.05 confirming the statistical significance of these improvements. This suggests that the gamified approach had a measurable positive impact on students' language proficiency.

ANOVA Results for Survey Responses on Gamification Impact

Next, we analyzed the survey responses, using ANOVA to assess the effect of gamification on students' motivation, enjoyment, retention, creativity, and confidence in language use. As shown

in Table 2, all aspects of gamification had a statistically significant impact. The results highlight how gamified activities influenced students' attitudes and experiences in various areas related to learning.

Table 2 – ANOVA Results for Survey Responses on the Impact of Gamification on Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Aspect	F-Statistic	p-Value	Conclusion
Motivation to Participate	8.56	0.01	Highly Significant
Enjoyment of Learning	7.72	0.02	Highly Significant
Better Retention of Material	5.43	0.03	Significant Improvement
Increased Creativity in Projects	6.13	0.02	Significant Improvement
Higher Confidence in Language Use	6.85	0.01	Highly Significant

Note: The p-values in all areas are below 0.05, indicating that gamification significantly enhanced students' motivation, enjoyment, retention of material, creativity, and confidence in using the foreign language.

Key Findings

The analysis revealed that the gamified learning approach led to significant improvements in language proficiency among students. On average, there was a 15% increase in vocabulary acquisition, grammar usage, and speaking fluency, as measured by the post-test scores. This improvement demonstrates that gamification effectively enhanced students' ability to use the target language in real-world contexts.

From the survey data, 85% of students reported feeling more motivated to participate in the language activities due to the gamified approach. Similarly, 75% of students enjoyed the learning process more than they would have with traditional teaching methods. This suggests that gamification made learning more engaging and appealing to the students.

When it came to language retention, 70% of the students said that the gamified approach helped them remember new vocabulary and language structures more effectively than conventional classroom methods. This finding suggests that the interactive, game-like elements of the lessons contributed to better retention by encouraging active learning and engagement.

Creativity and Confidence in Language Use

Another key finding was the significant increase in students' creativity and confidence. The group project, which required students to design and pitch a new tourist attraction using the foreign language, provided an excellent opportunity for them to apply their language skills in a creative way. Students incorporated new vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references into their presentations, demonstrating the impact of gamification on their language use. The competitive nature of the gamified environment further encouraged students to push their boundaries, fostering a sense of achievement and boosting their confidence in using the language.
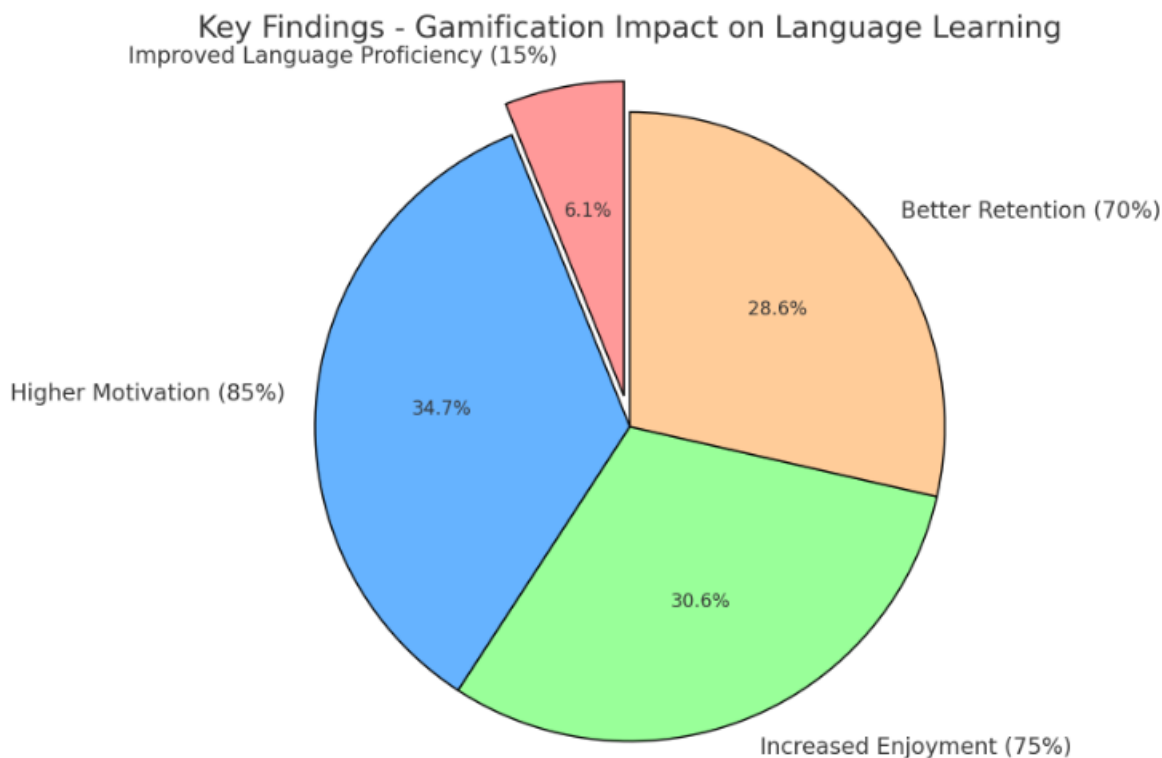
Figure 1 – Visual Representation: Key Findings

To visually represent the results, we created a pie chart showing the key outcomes of the study:

- **Higher Motivation**: 85% of students reported increased motivation due to gamified activities.
- **Increased Enjoyment**: 75% of students found the gamified approach more enjoyable than traditional methods.
- **Better Retention**: 70% of students believed they retained new language skills better.
- **Improved Language Proficiency**: 15% of students showed measurable improvement in their language skills, as reflected in the post-test results.

This chart clearly illustrates the positive impact that gamification had on students' motivation, enjoyment, and language proficiency, reinforcing the effectiveness of the gamified learning approach.

The results of this study suggest that gamification significantly enhances student engagement and improves language proficiency. By integrating game-like elements into the learning process, students became more motivated, enjoyed the lessons more, and showed better retention of language skills. These findings support the use of gamification as an effective tool in language learning, particularly within the context of tourism education, where real-world applications and creativity are key to success.

Comparison

When comparing the results of the gamified group to a control group that utilized traditional language learning methods, it became evident that gamification had a substantial positive impact on student engagement and language proficiency. The control group, which followed a conventional learning structure based primarily on textbook exercises and teacher-led instruction, demonstrated

only marginal improvements. On average, the control group's post-test score increased by just 5%, a stark contrast to the 15% improvement observed in the gamified group.

Additionally, survey data highlighted the differing experiences between the two groups. In the control group, 60% of students reported feeling disengaged from the learning process, with many citing the lack of interactive or competitive elements as a major contributing factor. This lack of stimulation, in comparison to the dynamic and engaging gamified environment, may have hindered their overall motivation and performance.

Interpretation of Results

The findings of this study align with existing research in the field of language acquisition, which has shown that gamification can significantly boost student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Anderson & Dill, 2001; Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014). Gamified learning environments, with their focus on interactive and competitive elements, provide students with the opportunity to apply their language skills in a practical and real-world context. This not only helps with the retention of language skills but also encourages students to take ownership of their learning, resulting in increased intrinsic motivation to improve.

Furthermore, these results underline the relevance of gamification in tourism education, where language proficiency is a critical skill. By simulating authentic tourism scenarios, the gamified approach enabled students to practice their language skills in meaningful and context-rich settings. This was especially valuable for students pursuing careers in the tourism industry, where effective communication with international tourists and colleagues is essential. The immersive nature of gamification mirrors the practical application of language in real-world situations, allowing students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Study Limitations

While the results of the study are promising, there are some important limitations to consider. One key limitation is the relatively small sample size of 42 students, which may not fully capture the diverse range of students in tourism programs. A larger and more varied sample size would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of gamification across different student demographics. Additionally, the short duration of the study limits our ability to evaluate the long-term effects of gamified learning on language retention and the broader career outcomes for students. Without long-term follow-up, it is unclear whether the improvements observed in students would be sustained over time, especially if gamified elements are not integrated into subsequent learning experiences.

Practical Implications

The results of this study have meaningful implications for language teaching in the tourism sector. Gamification, as shown in the findings, has the potential to greatly enhance student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency. This suggests that language instructors in tourism programs could significantly benefit from incorporating gamified elements into their teaching strategies. For example, educators could include role-playing activities, quizzes, simulations, and competitive challenges as part of their curriculum to create a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

Moreover, educators can design courses that simulate real-world tourism contexts, allowing students not only to improve their language skills but also to develop essential soft skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. These skills are critical in the tourism industry and can be honed through the immersive learning experience provided by gamification.

For instructors, this study suggests that incorporating game-like elements into the curriculum

can make the learning process more enjoyable and effective. When students are actively engaged, they are more likely to retain what they learn, leading to greater satisfaction and better language acquisition outcomes. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of connecting language learning with real-world applications, particularly in fields like tourism where practical knowledge and communication skills are paramount.

Finally, the study opens the door for further research on the long-term effects of gamification on language retention and its impact on students' professional success. Future studies could explore how gamified learning influences not only language skills but also broader career outcomes, helping to establish the long-term value of gamification in educational contexts, especially in fields that require strong language proficiency like tourism.

Conclusion

Summary of findings: This study showed that gamification plays a key role in encouraging a creative approach to learning foreign languages. By incorporating game-like elements, students become more engaged, making the learning experience not only more enjoyable but also more motivating. It encourages active participation, which helps students connect with the material on a deeper level and improves their overall learning experience.

Suggestions for future research: Looking ahead, it would be interesting to explore different types of games, like simulations or role-playing games, to see how they affect various aspects of language learning. It would also be beneficial to study the long-term effects of gamification, specifically how it influences students' motivation and engagement after the gaming activities are over.

Practical recommendations: For teachers, it's a great idea to bring in gamification elements such as points, levels, and team challenges to create a more interactive and fun classroom environment. The key is to ensure that the games align with the learning goals and content. Using platforms that support gamified learning can be an effective tool, and getting regular feedback from students will help teachers adjust and improve their approach to keep students engaged.

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ТУРИЗМ СТУДЕНТТЕРІНІҢ ШЕТ ТІЛІН ҮЙРЕНУІНДЕ ШЫҒАРМАШЫЛЫҚТЫ ДАМЫТУ: ҚАТЫСУҒА ҚҰРАЛ РЕТІНДЕ ГАМИФИКАЦИЯ

Аннотация. *Бұл зерттеу геймификацияның туристік бағыттағы студенттердің шет тілдерін үйренуге әсерін қарастырады. Зерттеуге шет туризм саласында оқитын 42 екінші курс студенттері қатысты.*

Деректер алдын ала және қорытынды сынақтар, сауалнамалар, сұхбаттар және бақылаулар арқылы жиналды. Студенттер рөлдік ойындар, модельдеу, викториналар және топтық жобаларды қамтитын геймификацияланған сабақтарға қатысты. Геймификацияның тиімділігін бағалау үшін сынақтар сабаққа дейін және одан кейін өткізілді, ал сауалнамалар студенттердің мотивациясын, олардың қатысуын және тәжірибені қабылдауын өлшеді.

Деректерді талдау ANOVA көмегімен жүргізілді, ол лексика, грамматика және еркін сөйлеуді қоса алғанда, тілдік дағдылардың статистикалық маңызды жақсартуларын көрсетті. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, геймификация студенттердің мотивациясын едәуір

арттырды (85%), оқу процесін қызықты етті (75%) және материалды игеруді жақсартты (70%). Алдын ала тестілеу нәтижелерімен салыстырғанда тілдік дайындық 15% жақсарды. Бұл нәтижелер шет тілдерін үйренуде, әсіресе туризмге арналған білім беру контекстінде геймификацияның тиімділігін растайды.

Кілт сөздер: *геймификация, шет тілдерін үйрену, туризм студенттері, мотивация, қатысу, тілдік дайындық.*

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РАЗВИТИЕ ТВОРЧЕСТВА У СТУДЕНТОВ ТУРИЗМА ПРИ ОСВОЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА: ГАМИФИКАЦИЯ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ УВЛЕЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация. *В данном исследовании рассматривается влияние геймификации на изучение иностранных языков студентами туристического направления. В исследовании приняли участие 42 студента туризма второго курса, обучающихся по курсу иностранного языка.*

Данные были собраны с помощью предварительных и итоговых тестов, анкет, интервью и наблюдений. Студенты участвовали в геймифицированных занятиях, включающих ролевые игры, симуляции, викторины и групповые проекты. Для оценки эффективности геймификации тесты были проведены до и после занятий, а анкеты измеряли мотивацию студентов, их вовлеченность и восприятие опыта.

Анализ данных был проведен с использованием ANOVA, который показал статистически значительные улучшения в языковых навыках, включая словарный запас, грамматику и беглость речи. Результаты показали, что геймификация значительно повысила мотивацию студентов (85%), сделала процесс обучения более увлекательным (75%) и улучшила усвоение материала (70%). Языковая подготовка улучшилась на 15% по сравнению с результатами предварительных тестов. Эти результаты подтверждают эффективность геймификации в изучении иностранных языков, особенно в контексте образования для туризма.

Ключевые слова: *геймификация, изучение иностранных языков, студенты туризма, мотивация, вовлеченность, языковая подготовка.*