

The Study on Teaching Strategies of English Guided Tours and Interpretation for Cultural Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The concept of English guided tours for cultural tourism pertains to an instructional approach that integrates language acquisition with cultural immersion. The main purpose of the study is to enhance the proficiency for interpreters and learners in applications of English language while simultaneously fostering their comprehension and appreciation towards local culture. Meanwhile, the study primarily investigates the implementation of teaching strategies within the context of English guided tours for cultural tourism. Furthermore, it encompasses language skill development, cultural knowledge transmission and delivery, field-trip study and exploration, and the utilization of multimedia resources. The results of this study offer critical value for reference and reflection on language acquisitions as well.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, English Guided Tour and Interpretation, Teaching Strategy

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1. Introduction

With the deepening of globalization and the booming international tourism, cultural tourism has emerged as an increasingly popular mode of travel. This form of tourism not only promotes economic growth, but also enhances understanding and exchanges within diverse cultures. As a global lingua franca, English has become an indispensable communication tool for cultural tourism. However, for many non-English speaking countries, effectively conducting English guided tours for cultural tourism is a major challenge. Consequently, exploring teaching strategies of English guided tours towards cultural tourism is crucial, as it not only improves the language proficiency of guided tours but also enhances the overall tourist experience.

English guided tours for cultural tourism face various challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, and the diversity of tourism content. According to Tanaka (2023), language barriers are the most prevalent issue in guided tour interpretation, this challenge is particularly evident for non-native English-speaking tour interpreters. In addition, cultural differences can affect the effectiveness of guided tours, as tourists from different cultural backgrounds may interpret and receive information differently (Sharma & Gao, 2021).

To address these challenges, it is essential to implement comprehensive training programs for guided tours. These programs ought to focus on improving English language proficiency, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Role-playing and simulated guided tours can deliver practical experience and assist interpreters to be more affable and confident in their language use. Furthermore, incorporating cultural sensitivity training can help guides understand and respect the different backgrounds of their audiences, enabling them to adapt their interpretation to meet the needs and expectations of different tourist groups.

The use of multimedia resources can also play a significant role in improving the effectiveness of English guided tours. Multimedia tools such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive digital platforms can offer visual and auditory support, making the content more engaging and easier to understand for tourists. For instance, virtual reality (VR) technology can provide immersive experiences of cultural heritage sites, allowing tourists to explore and interact with these sites in a virtual environment. This not only enhances the learning experience but also makes the tours more memorable and enjoyable.



Moreover, ongoing feedback and improvement are crucial for maintaining high-quality guided tours. Guided-tour interpreters/learners should be encouraged to seek feedback from tourists and use this information to refine their interpretation and presentation skills. Regular evaluations and assessments can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that interpreters are consistently delivering accurate and engaging information.

Therefore, the application of English guided tour and interpretation for cultural tourism is a powerfully instructional tool that enhances interpreters' language proficiency and cultural understanding. By refining teaching content, utilizing multimedia resources, and emphasizing practical skills and cultural experiences, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment. Regular teaching and training for interpreters/learners are also crucial to ensure high-quality guided tours and interpretation that enhance tourists' travel experiences and satisfaction. This comprehensive approach not only benefits students but also contributes to the overall success and sustainability of cultural tourism.



2. What Is Cultural Tourism?

Cultural tourism refers to travel activities whose main purpose is to comprehend and experience the culture of the destination, including visits to historical sites, museums, and art performances. As Richards (2018) pointed out, cultural tourism not only enhances tourists' cultural literacy, but also fosters the preservation and transmission of local culture. In the era of globalization, the demand for cultural tourism has progressively increased, becoming a significant component of the tourism industry.

The advancement of cultural tourism significantly impacts the local economy, society, and culture. Firstly, cultural tourism stimulates local economic growth, generates employment opportunities, and elevates residents' living standards (Richards, 2018). The influx of tourists leads to increased spending at local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, boosting the local economy. This economic stimulus can promote the development of infrastructure and public services, further benefiting the community.

Secondly, cultural tourism facilitates cultural exchange and understanding, thereby enhancing mutual trust and cooperation among different cultures (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Tourists can gain insight into the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of the host community, fostering a sense of global citizenship and empathy. This exchange can lead to long-term relationships and collaborations between different cultural groups, promoting peace and mutual respect.

Nevertheless, cultural tourism promotes the preservation and inheritance of local culture and supports the protection of cultural heritage (Cohen, 1985). The increased interest in cultural sites and traditions encourages local communities to maintain and restore their cultural assets. This preservation effort not only safeguards cultural heritage for future generations but also instills a sense of pride and identity among residents. Moreover, the revenue generated from cultural tourism can be reinvested into conservation projects, ensuring the sustainability of cultural resources.

Furthermore, cultural tourism can bring educational benefits to tourists and locals. Tourists can gain a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the destinations they visit, enrich their knowledge and broaden their horizons. For local communities, interactions with tourists can provide opportunities to learn new languages, skills, and ideas, and contribute to their personal and professional development.



In summary, cultural tourism plays a vital role in the contemporary tourism industry, offering numerous benefits to local economies, societies, and cultures. By stimulating economic growth, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting the preservation of cultural heritage, cultural tourism contributes to the overall well-being and sustainability of communities.



3. What Is Guided Tour?

“Guided Tour” represents a form of professional interpretation designed to introduce and elucidate the history, culture, and background of tourist attractions to the audience. According to Ap and Wong (2001), guided tours must possess extensive knowledge and exceptional communication skills to capture the audience’s attention and enhance their experience. Bowdin et al. (2023) emphasized that the effectiveness of guided tours is pivotal in enriching tourists’ travel experiences.

The fundamental principles of guided tours encompass accuracy, conciseness, vividness, and interactivity. Firstly, the guided-tour interpreter must ensure the accuracy of the content, including the historical background and significance of the cultural heritage site (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Accurate information is crucial as it builds trust and credibility with the audience, ensuring that the interpretation is informative and reliable. Secondly, the content of guided tour and interpretation ought to be concise, highlighting the key features of the cultural attractions to facilitate quick comprehension by tourists (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Conciseness helps in maintaining the audience’s attention and prevents information overload, making the tour more enjoyable and memorable.

Furthermore, the guided-tour interpreters should employ vivid language and figurative metaphors to enhance tourists’ interest (Lashley, 2000). Vivid descriptions and engaging storytelling can bring the history and culture of the site to life, making the experience more immersive and captivating. This approach not only entertains but also educates the audience, leaving a lasting impression. Nevertheless, the use of anecdotes and personal stories related to the site can make the tour more relatable and engaging.

Moreover, the guided-tour interpreters should encourage visitors to ask questions and engage in discussions to foster interactivity (Ap & Wong, 2001). Interactivity is essential as it transforms a passive listening experience into an active learning process. By inviting questions and facilitating discussions, tour guides can address the specific interests and curiosities of the audience, making the tour more personalized and dynamic. This interactive approach also helps in building a connection between the guide and the tourists, enhancing the overall experience.



Furthermore, guided tours should be adaptable to cater to diverse audiences with varying levels of prior knowledge and interests. Tailoring the content to suit different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and educational levels can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the tour. For instance, a tour designed for children might include more interactive elements and simplified explanations, while a tour for history enthusiasts might delve deeper into historical details and lesser-known facts.

In addition to these principles, the use of modern technology can greatly enhance guided tours. Audio guides, mobile apps, and augmented reality (AR) can provide supplementary information and interactive experiences that complement the tour guide's narration. These technologies can offer multilingual support, making the tours accessible to a broader audience. For example, AR can overlay historical images onto the current landscape, providing a visual representation of how the site looked in the past, thereby enriching the storytelling experience.

As articulated above, guided tour and interpretation are the vital components of cultural tourism, offering a structured and engaging approach to explore and understand tourist attractions and heritage sites. By adhering to the principles of accuracy, conciseness, vividness, and interactivity, guided-tour interpreters can create enriching and memorable experiences for tourists. Ongoing training and the integration of modern technology can further improve the quality and effectiveness of guided tours, ensuring it remains a valuable educational tool for the tourism industry.



4. Teaching Strategies of English Guided Tours for Cultural Tourism

- 4.1 Language Proficiency Training:** Enhancing interpreters' English conversational and expressive abilities can form the foundation of English guided tour and interpretation for cultural tourism. Bharwani and Mathews (2012) asserted that simulated guided tour practices can familiarize students with professional terminology and expression techniques, thereby boosting their confidence and fluency. Through role-playing and simulated scenarios, interpreters/learners can drill to deliver guided-tour interpretations and receive immediate feedback and corrections.
- 4.2 Cultural Knowledge Transmission and Delivery:** A comprehensive understanding and mastery of local history, culture, and customs is essential for successful guided-tour services. Tsai and Lu (2012) noted that the transmission of cultural knowledge ought to encompass historical background, cultural heritage, traditional festivals, and folk culture. Educators can facilitate interpreters/learners thorough understanding of local culture and enhance their cultural literacy and interpretative skills through lectures, reading materials, and films.
- 4.3 Field Trips:** Field trips are essential for developing interpreters' practical capabilities and improving their guided touring and interpretative skills. Cook, Hsu and Taylor (2018) indicated that organizing visits to local cultural attractions enables students to apply knowledge from the lab in practice, thereby enhancing their practical skills and adaptability. During field trips, interpreters/learners can observe professional guided tour applications, learn their techniques and methods, and on-site practices.
- 4.4 Utilization of Multimedia Resources:** Employing multimedia resources can enrich teaching content and enhance interpreters' interest and learning effectiveness. Kalvet, Olesk, Tiits and Raun (2020) indicated that multimedia tools such as videos, pictures, and audio can assist students intuitively to understand and master the interpretative content, thereby improving learning outcomes. Educators can use multimedia courseware, online videos, virtual reality, and other technologies to diversify teaching methods/approaches and enhance teaching effectiveness. According to the gender distribution of the tourists interviewed in this activity, there were 185 males (approximately 46.25%) and 215 females (approximately 53.75%), indicating a slight gender ratio difference, with a marginally higher number of female tourists.



5. Conclusion

The applications of English guided tour and interpretation in cultural tourism serve as an effective teaching strategy, aiding interpreters/learners in enhancing their English language proficiency while deepening their understanding and appreciation of local culture. Future instructional methods and approaches ought to aim at refining the teaching content, augmenting the utilization of multimedia resources, and emphasizing the development of interpreters' practical skills and cultural experiences. It is advisable to offer regular training sessions for guided-tour interpreters/learners to bolster their English interpretative abilities and to continuously refine their interpretation skills based on tourist feedback, thereby improving tourists' overall travel experience and satisfaction.

The use of English guided tour and interpretation in cultural tourism represents a multifaceted pedagogical strategy that significantly benefits interpreters/learners by enhancing their English language proficiency and deepening their understanding and appreciation of local culture. This approach not only equips interpreters/learners with essential language skills but also immerses them in the cultural context of the destinations they explore, fostering a more holistic educational experience. Firstly, the integration of English guided-tour interpretation into cultural tourism education provides interpreters/learners with a practical and immersive environment to practice their language skills. By engaging in real-world scenarios where they must explain cultural and historical contexts to tourists, interpreters/learners can develop their conversational abilities, improve their vocabulary, and gain confidence in their language use. This hands-on experience is invaluable, as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making language learning more relevant and effective.

Moreover, the use of guide-tour interpretation allows interpreters/learners to deliver deeper into the cultural and historical aspects of the destinations they explore and observe. This approach encourages them to research and understand the significance of various cultural sites, traditions, and historical events, thereby enriching their cultural literacy. As interpreters/learners prepare their interpretation skills, they are compelled to explore the nuances of local culture, which enhances their appreciation and respect for cultural diversity. This deeper understanding is crucial in a globalized world where cultural sensitivity and awareness are increasingly important.



Hence, future instructional methods ought to focus on refining the content of guided-tour interpretations to ensure they are comprehensive and engaging. Educators can achieve this by incorporating a variety of multimedia resources, such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive digital platforms, to create a more dynamic and engaging learning experience. Multimedia tools can help illustrate complex cultural concepts and historical events, making them more accessible and interesting for students. For instance, virtual reality (VR) technology can provide immersive experiences of cultural sites, allowing interpreters/learners to explore and interact with these locations in a virtual environment. This not only enhances their learning experience but also prepares them for real-world guided tours.

Emphasizing the development of interpreters' practical skills and cultural experiences is another critical aspect of this pedagogical strategy. Field trips and hands-on activities should be integral components of the curriculum, allowing interpreters/learners to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. During these excursions, interpreters/learners can practice their guided-tour interpretation techniques, receive feedback from peers and instructors, and refine their skills. Observing professional guided-tour interpreters in action can also provide valuable insights into effective communication techniques and audience engagement strategies.

Regular training sessions for guided-tour interpreters/learners are essential to maintain and improve the quality of interpretation. These sessions should focus on enhancing English interpretative abilities and continuously refining interpretation techniques based on feedback from tourists. By staying up to date on the latest trends and best practices in cultural tourism, guided-tour interpreters/learners can ensure their skills remain relevant and engaging. In addition, training programs can cover various aspects of tour guiding, such as storytelling techniques, audience interaction, and the use of technology in guided tours.

Finally, the application of English guided tour and interpretation in cultural tourism is a powerfully educational tool that enhances students' language proficiency and cultural understanding. By refining teaching content, utilizing multimedia resources, and emphasizing practical skills and cultural experiences, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment. Regular training for guided-tour interpreters/learners is also crucial to ensure high-quality interpretations that enhance tourists' travel experiences and satisfaction. This comprehensive approach not only benefits interpreters/learners but also contributes to the overall success and sustainability of cultural tourism.



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文化旅遊英語導覽解說之教學策略

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摘 要

文化旅遊英語導覽解說係指一種結合語言學習和文化體驗的教學方法，主要目的在於提升解說人員與相關學習者的英語能力及其對當地文化之理解與賞析。因此，本研究主要探討文化旅遊英語導覽解說之教學策略應用，其內容涵蓋語言能力訓練、文化知識傳授、實地探勘及多媒體資源利用，其研究結果亦提出相對應之建議，期以為語言教學提供有益之參考。

關鍵字：文化旅遊、英語導覽解說、教學策略

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