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EFL Students' Experiences of Cultural Heritage Interpretation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the efforts of university EFL students when attempting to interpret cultural heritage. This study is an attempt to help teachers and students become better aware of the process and challenge of a more reality-based class activity such as giving a heritage interpretation, with the ultimate goal of improving the effectiveness of English teaching and learning. This study employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods and is divided into three stages: 1. In-class preparation 2. Professional demonstration 3. On-site tour interpretation. The results of the study indicate that students have a positive view of the interpretation activity and feel it helped to increase their cultural, historical, and architectural knowledge of the heritage sites, enlarged their English vocabulary, improved their English interpretation skills, and familiarized them with tour guide interpretation and related work content. Major problems students experienced include: finding the appropriate materials, identifying the interpretation theme, overcoming a lack of historical and cultural knowledge, understanding and transforming formal English text into oral style, translating culture-specific terms from Chinese into English, organizing topics, interpreting data, and pronouncing unfamiliar words. Students hoped for assistance finding interpretation materials and themes, improving their English fluency, and polishing their interpretation skills.

Keywords: *heritage interpretation, EFL, tourism, ESP*

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