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Interpretation Performed by Certified Tourist Guides in Lisbon During the Pandemic: a Case Study

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Interpretation quality distinguishes tourist guides. According to an investigation carried out by the authors in 2012, tourists who travel with a guide claim that although these professionals play many different, relevant, and complementary roles, interpretation is, without a doubt, the most important asset. In Europe, a traveller can find tourist guides who have a certification issued by international European organisations and who have gone through training in interpretation, together with guides who do not have any training at all and are not certified by any organisation. This paper is only about the former. The idea of conducting this study arose from the fact that, from March 2020 onwards, the Covid-19 pandemic left over 90% of the guides unemployed. Many of them changed profession, others had to live very much below their usual standards, sometimes even facing serious issues, and some of them decided to face the situation by creating their own walking tours (in Lisbon) and started selling them on social media. This is where interpretation really becomes important. To plan and perform a walking tour, guides have to develop very good competences in the interpretation area. In order to obtain data on the interpretation performed by the guides who conducted their walking tours during the pandemic period, a questionnaire was designed and sent to 25 certified guides who were active from March 2020 to February 2021, all performing several themed walking tours in Lisbon. The findings of this research are presented in this paper in the form of a case study. Data collection took place in January and February 2021 aimed at understanding how Lisbon guides who organised and implemented their own walking tours use interpretation tools. Questions were asked to understand who the guides are, what type of tours were designed, the topics and themes of tours, and especially how do tourist guides use their interpretation skills.

Key Words: heritage interpretation, certified tourist guide, Lisbon, walking tours, pandemic

Introduction

Tourist guides have been a topic of scientific investigation ally for the past 50 years, from several different angles and perspectives. From the late-1970s up to now, there has been a deep change in tourism and tourists, their motivations and experiences. In this context, tourist guides constantly had (and still have) to adapt to the new trends. The way they interpret heritage has also been going through a constant evolution – there is a trend for a much wider, deeper and more complex knowledge about heritage interpretation than ever before, in order to satisfy the needs of the very well-informed 21st-century tourists (Joaquim *et al*, 2019).

Nowadays, in Europe, certified guides (here defined as guides who were subjected to a certification assessment organised by a guides' association) can arguably be divided into two types: tourist guides and interpretive guides. The first one is a

Person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area, which person normally possesses an area-specific qualification usually issued and / or recognised by the appropriate authority (FEG European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations).

These individuals are a central part of the tourism industry. They take on many different roles, and they do generalist tour guiding in any setting. They lead groups of mass tourists, package tours and sightseeing tours in the cities, regions, or countries where they work at. Some of them travel with the tourists on extended and overnight tours. In this case they also play the part of tour manager, or tour director. They interpret heritage, usually building their comments on facts mostly related to History and Geography, but they also take care of the tourists, including their health and safety matters, and other issues and problems that they find along the way (Weiler & Black, 2015). They are part of the destination's image, and they feel they represent the destination as a sort of unofficial ambassador. Their aim is the clients' satisfaction, but they are also image-makers when affecting the visitors' experience (Iriguler & Guler, 2016). They are a key piece in the landscape in which planning and sustainability concerns are rooted (Tatar, Hermand & Gozner, 2018).

The second group are interpretive guides, which are defined as follows:

Professional interpreters [who] do not only facilitate learning processes as guides in face-to-face dialogues. They also make use of other media supporting the experience of heritage, including audio guides, text panels, multimedia apps etc. They provoke peoples' curiosity and interest by relating the site or objects to the participants' own knowledge, experience, background and values. Professional interpreters also refrain from simply communicating unrelated facts or strictly defined messages (IE Interpret Europe).

These individuals do not directly depend on tourism as an industry. They master the principles and techniques of interpretation and are well-trained to interpret natural and cultural heritage in local walking tours that last 2 to 3 hours, a full day, or more rarely overnight, mostly in specific settings such as mountains, national parks, zoos, small towns, but rarely in larger cities. They usually like to include in their speeches personal life stories and give a more contemporary perspective of the place

they talk about (Weiler & Black, 2015). They are part of the local brand image, but they hardly feel they represent the destination. Their aim is above all the clients' education in accordance with sustainable principles.

What distinguishes them is their connection with the tourism sector (which is central in the first case and more peripheral in the second one), and their perspective of the tourist (mainly composed of foreigners in the case of tourist guides, and a mixture of domestic and sometimes foreign tourists in the case of interpretive guides). Therefore, the performance of interpretive guides can be either more controlled or more flexible. Interpretive guides are usually aware of interpretation principles and techniques, whereas this role is usually underperformed by tourist guides due to inadequate or insufficient training (Weiler & Black, 2015).

However, according to regulations, tourist guides should have a much longer education – undertaking a minimum training of 600 hours, with 40% of this being practical training, according to the European Standard (EN 15565). Interpretive guides on the other hand, have a shorter required training process, undertaking 40 hours in their training programme in accordance with the Interpret Europe certification system (IE Interpret Europe. Retrieved from <https://interpret-europe.net/>).

These two types of guides target different markets and are certified by different organisations: Tourist guides are certified by their own associations in their own countries and improve their techniques in life-long learning courses offered by the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG) and by the local associations; Interpretive guides are certified by Interpret Europe (IE), a European association that also offers specific training courses and seminars. Interpretation is a common activity of both tourist guides and interpretive guides. The core question of this paper is related to both kinds of guides, but it only studies certified tourist guides. The key question is: do certified tourist guides convey quality presentations using interpretation techniques?

In 2010, 683 tourists answered a survey about their guides (Brito, 2012). Tourists were asked, among other issues, their opinion on the relative importance of the different roles played by the guides. Over 90% of the tourists interviewed selected interpretation as the most important role, followed by mediation and leadership. Therefore, it is crucial to study and deeply understand this significant asset of the guiding profession. During the pandemic, which in Portugal started in March 2020 and became controlled by the beginning of October 2021 when 85% of the population was vaccinated, about 90%¹ of Portuguese tourist guides became unemployed. Some of them counted on the income of their partners and family to survive, but those who did not have any income besides their work had to find different solutions to overcome the unexpected. Some guides started their own small enterprises, many decided to work in Real Estate agencies and others joined call centres, using their language, mediation, and leadership skills. It must be said that the Portuguese State helped the guides by granting them a subvention of about €500 per month (the amount varied according to the revenue they previously earned).

In Lisbon, there are around 350 guides². Out of this number, approximately 25 tourist guides created new walking tours, or scheduled old ones they had already designed. They then promoted their tours on the Internet (via personal websites, travel agencies, Facebook, and Instagram), and sought the collaboration of their professional associations. This was their way of facing the lack of work and to obtain some pocket money, because what they got from the State was not enough to maintain their living standards. In fact, for at least two years they had to survive below the average standard of living.

In undertaking the research that arose from an investigation of this situation, a number of secondary questions arise:

How do tourist guides use interpretation?

¹ The exact number of tourist guides in Lisbon is unknown. Therefore, an estimated figure is presented, according to the President of AGIC (Portuguese Tourist Guides and Tour Managers Association).

² Idem

Are they conscious of their interpretation skills?
Which are the techniques they use the most?

This paper is a case study about the heritage interpretation performed by 20 tourist guides in Lisbon over the course of a single year, during the pandemic - from March 2020 to February 2021. It aims at understanding if and which interpretation techniques are used in the walking tours designed by these professionals, all of them certified tourist guides.

The next section discusses the literature on heritage interpretation referring to the most relevant authors. Then, the research design is explained as well as the hypothesis formulated according to the objectives of the investigation. Results and findings are subsequently discussed using graphs based on the answers of the respondents and finally conclusions will be drawn.

Heritage Interpretation

There are many ways to conceptualise interpretation. Nevertheless, any work on this subject should start by mentioning Freeman Tilden, who was the author to give the following still well-accepted definition of interpretation as

An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (Tilden, 1977:8).

Tilden's definition includes several important ideas: Interpretation is an informal way to educate the people; it is an activity, so that implies it is dynamic; it aims at unveiling the meanings (not facts although based on them), and to establish a relationship between the interpreted object and the public, with the interpreter as mediator; it must be done in the presence of the object; props and other techniques, or methods may be used to illustrate the explanation; and it distinguishes information (which is facts), from interpretation (which is meanings).

The complex notion of interpretation has evolved over the last 50 years and there are now many different definitions of interpretation. According to Weiler & Black (2015) heritage interpretation gives deep meanings to a resource, following Tilden's principles – to provoke, relate and reveal – on enhancing the visitor's experience and establishing emotional and intellectual connections between the visitor and the resource – to give and take enjoyment from heritage.

Provocation includes getting the tourist to think, care, and act in ways that are consistent with sustainability outcomes (Weiler & Kim, 2011). To relate means to make connections between an object, event or person in the visited country and the tourist home country or his / her personal references, so that the tourist can understand the story (Puczko, 2006). To reveal is to give the tourist the opportunity to discover something new and relevant (Tilden, 1977).

But interpretation is also a Mission (NAI - National Association for Interpretation. Retrieved from www.interpnet.com) – The notion of Mission in interpretation has its origins in the US park rangers, whose mission is to educate the visitors while showing them the beauty and relevance of American natural and cultural heritage. The interpreter is supposed to change the visitor's attitude towards conservation and sustainability by giving deep meanings to the resource and adding positive memories for the visitor, so that he/she feels 'the sense of place' and will to return to the destination. The mission of interpretation includes sustainability, education, and entertainment (or even Edutainment), and it aims at inspiring visitors to change their behaviour into a more responsible attitude towards heritage. Mindful visitors (inquisitive, alert, participatory) are more inclined to learn than mindless visitors, who tend to be passive, do not ask questions, or participate actively in discussions (Moscardo, 1999). In short, we could state that the mission of interpretation is to make the world a better place.

To this end, guides must be in harmony with their public. According to Meged (2010), guiding is a co-performance, meaning that the guides' performance

highly depends on the attitude of the tourists. To feel engaged and enhance his / her experience, the visitor should actively participate in guiding and in the tour, including taking part in games, role-play, acting, singing and stories, which are central in interpretation (Ham, 2013; Moscardo, 1999; Tilden, 1977).

The guide can also suggest an activity to make people feel useful and integrated in the place where they are. For instance, collecting garbage along a walking tour or while visiting a town – if the theme is in accordance with the activity –, or finding signs of heritage miss-conservation (in natural or built heritage). If these are used, the experience will be more memorable and mindful. Following these principles, interpretation would help to change the visitor's attitude towards conservation and sustainability by establishing emotional and intellectual connections between them and the resource, as well as giving and taking enjoyment from heritage (Moscardo, 1999).

Interpretation is a multifaceted system of methods and skills. It implies that besides a topic, the interpreter creates a theme – a concise, essential, and impressive full sentence. The theme is a statement that works as a path to build interpretation, guiding the interpreter as the 'beacon of a lighthouse' (Thorsten, 2015:2003). It supports the interpreter's speech while also working as an organisation tool (Thorsten, 2015). It contains the main idea of the talk or the moral of the story and helps the visitor to understand the resource as it connects tangible items with universal significance (Ham, 2013).

Criticism over interpretation has arisen over the years. Arguably, interpretation interferes with the visitor's experience. Therefore, once an individual experiences someone else's interpretation, he / she will never be able to have his / her own interpretation (Moscardo, 2000). However, not everybody has sufficient background to understand the deep meaning of a place, thus, they need help. Another problem emerges when interpreters provide propaganda instead of presentation (Moscardo *et al*, 2000), as tends to happen in some countries / destinations.

In short, quality interpretation is quite complex and difficult to achieve (Weiler & Black, 2015). According to Yamada, Skibins and Weiler (2021:3),

guides require a range of hard and soft skill competencies, that include group management, tour operation, health and risk management, language translation, communication with visitors, and interpretation of heritage resources.

Besides the interpretation principles, methods and skills described above, a well-trained guide also uses interpretation techniques. Examples of the latter include rhetoric, such as comparisons with the everyday life of the tourist or elements they are familiar with, analogies and personification, storytelling, making connections between tangible and universal concepts, asking questions, making use of humour, and props (Weiler & Black, 2015; Thorsten, 2015). Emotions conveyed through the five senses are also important to activate memories and improve perception and sense of place (Agapito, Mendes & Valle, 2013), especially the stimulation of visual and non-visual senses together (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2012). By stimulating the senses, the guide can reach the heart and mind of the tourists (Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

The question is: Are tourist guides aware of these techniques? In the next section, we will describe the methodology we used to understand if tourist guides developed all the skills presented above and if they are conscious of the interpretation techniques. In other words, if they are interpretive guides.

Methodology

The methodology of the present paper was developed in three phases: Literature review, questionnaire survey and participant observation. The literature review included some of the most relevant publications on tour guiding and heritage interpretation: Tilden (1977), Ham (2013; 1992), Weiler & Black (2015), Pabel & Pearce (2016), Moscardo (2000; 1999), Thorsten (2015; 2003), among others. These authors were particularly important in two parts of the work: Interpretation principles - conceptualisation and techniques, and questionnaire design.

For a clear understanding of the questionnaire's design, Table 1 is provided. In this table we find five columns, so that all elements of the questionnaire can be seen in relation with one another: Hypotheses,

Table 1 - Hypotheses, Objectives, Analysis Dimensions, Supporting Studies and Questions

Hypotheses	Objectives	Analysis Dimensions	Supporting Studies	Questions
	1. Characterise the respondents. 2. Characterise the audience.	I – Demographic data	Quivy & Campenhoudt (2005)	36, 37, 38 D, E
Hypothesis 1: Tourist guides have a clear perception of what a theme is and attribute meanings to the facts.	3. Distinguish topic and theme of the tour. 4. Distinguish facts and meanings.	II – Ability to state the theme and meanings of a walking tour	Ham (1992) Thorsten (2015) Weiler & Black (2015)	A, B, C 1, 2
Hypothesis 2: Tourist guides use the basic principles of interpretation.	5. Analyse the tourist guides ability to provoke, relate and reveal.	III – Basic interpretive potential of tourist guides	Tilden (1977) Ham (2013) Moscardo (1999, 2017)	3, 4, 5
Hypothesis 3: Tourist guides are aware of the interpretative techniques that are available to them.	6. Assess the tourist guides' awareness of interpretive techniques.	IV – Advanced interpretive potential of tourist guides	Agapito et al. (2013) Pabel & Pearce (2016) Thorsten (2003) Thorsten (2015)	6 to 15

Source: authors

objectives, analysis dimensions, supporting studies and the questions that were asked to the guides. The three hypotheses of the study are:

Hypothesis 1: Tourist guides have a clear perception of what a theme is and attribute meanings to the facts.

Hypothesis 2: Tourist guides use the basic principles of interpretation.

Hypothesis 3: Tourist guides are aware of the interpretative techniques that are available to them.

These hypotheses are related to the six objectives and the four analysis dimensions of the survey (Table 1). The questions that were asked to the tourist guides are positioned in relation to the studies they are based on.

Questionnaire

According to Finn & Elliott-White (2000), research in the area of tourism often includes a questionnaire survey as part of the inquiry method. A scientific investigation requires a sample that answers a number of questions previously determined as relevant to the research. Through this method, it is possible to compare individual elements of the same sample, using the same questions.

The inquiry method can take different forms. In this paper, the approach used in the analysis of the questionnaires is descriptive and qualitative (Yin, 1989), as the questions focus on attributes and competences rather than numerical data. The sample of this paper is very small – 20 tourist guides out of 25 working in Lisbon in the period analysed, i.e., 80% of the given universe – but a case study does not require a more representative sample. On the other hand, in these circumstances, the only possible sampling is convenience. Therefore, this study does not represent the whole body of the tourist guides and has very limited value. However, we believe that it is very helpful in obtaining a range of opinions that can be tested more rigorously in further research.

The survey was conducted in January and February 2021 through a digital questionnaire using Google Forms. Respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire which was sent by e-mail. The most important advantages of digital questionnaires include time-efficiency, and the fact that respondents do not feel pressured, therefore they can answer when they have time, giving more accurate answers.

The questionnaire originally had 44 questions. Only 22 questions are presented and analysed herein, because the rest are about communication issues. Guides were asked to respond to the survey only if they had conducted an active walking tour in Lisbon during the pandemic. The information shared by the Portuguese guides' association (AGIC) was that 25 guides performed walking tours in Lisbon at this time. From this number, 20 answered the online questionnaire. This number of guides corresponds to $\pm 7.1\%$ of the total number of guides working in Lisbon (± 350 guides). But, there are no precise numbers since there is no mandatory registration for tourist guides in Portugal, neither by the two existing associations, nor by any other official organisation. On the other hand, during the pandemic, many guides changed profession, since they were among the most affected professionals³, and while the AGIC suggests that the majority want to return to the guiding profession when activity resumes, there are also those who are somewhat reticent.

Observation

As Rebolo (2021) remarked, direct observation allows the researcher to get deeply into a topic and truly to know the object of study, as it can be quite misleading to rely only on the information given by participants in questionnaires. Furthermore, the act of spending quality time on location has been judged to be the best way to add relevant information to a field of study. Without being familiar with the context in which the research takes place, it can be quite challenging for researchers to add any significant information on the object of study, with

³ Editor's Note - see paper by Carvalho elsewhere in this Issue for a discussion of the impacts of COVID-19 on Portuguese Tour(ist) Guides

the risk of simply providing an analysis based on papers already published (Rebolo, 2021).

In the present case, direct observation consisted of participating in 10 walking tours that lasted 2 to 3 hours. The researchers booked and paid for the walking tours on the Internet just like any other person and showed up at the starting point of the tour. The researchers followed the tour until the end, listening to the guide and observing the reactions of the audience. Immediately after the tour they took notes of what was seen, heard, and experienced during the tour. The main purpose was to confirm (or not) the data obtained in the survey, the effectiveness of the interpretation techniques on the public and the quality of the talks.

Results and Findings

Not surprisingly for the authors, the demographic data of the questionnaires reveal that 90% of the guides are female. There were only two males guiding the walks. More surprising is the fact that 70% of those who decided to conceive a new walking tour are aged between 41 and 50 years, while 20% are over 50 and less than 60 years old. This means that only two guides are young (40 years old or less), and it also means that experienced guides risk the most in new products probably because they are more confident: 70% have been a guide for more than 30 years, whereas 20% for more than 20 years.

The walks are usually quite long: 2/3 of them (or 13 walks) last between 2 and 3 hours, whereas 1/3 (8 walks) last between 3 and 4 hours. This fact means that the public has to stand up and walk for a long period of time – it would be hard for elderly people to participate in such long walks. Looking at the audiences, adults prevail, there are no seniors and only 1/4 of the participants are teenagers. Furthermore, a good portion of the participants are colleagues who take part in the walks out of curiosity, but specially to learn and acquire more information with their fellow guides. This explains why 85% of the public is Portuguese.

When the guides are asked about the content of their walks, from a total of 20 responses, 19 are clearly cultural, and only one is nature-based. We can divide the cultural tours according to their type. There are 7 literary walks about Portuguese writers; 4 regarding urban neighbourhoods (industrial or traditional); 3 related to Peoples (Africans, Italians, Jews); 2 walks concerning music, either traditional, like the Portuguese song called *fado*, or opera theatres and the everyday-life around them. Finally, there are three other tours: one generalist, one about science and illness (contagious diseases and epidemics), and another about traditional and old shops. The nature-based tour is about protected trees found across Lisbon's public gardens.

When the 20 guides were asked about the theme of their walks, only 5 could express it clearly. Most of the professionals (13) explained the topic instead of the theme and 2 even stated a different topic. Obviously, guides are not used to working with themes, at least in accordance with Sam Ham's concept.

The first three questions about interpretation were based on Tilden's six principles of interpretation. In a simple way, we wanted to know if guides can provoke, relate, and reveal. The charts show that they are competent in all of these skills (Figures 1, 2 and 3), but direct observation shows that most guides have more difficulty in provoking than in relating or revealing, and sometimes provocation is completely absent from the discourse. Surprise is the most important means to provoke, followed by questions and stories. These three together make 3/4 of the total number of answers (Figure 1).

Not unlike provoking, relating is quite usual for the guides – 75% of them state they often establish a relationship between the attraction and the audience, but it is significant that 25% do not do it (Figure 2). Nonetheless, when talking about revealing something unique and relevant to the public, we get the most amazing number: 100% of the tourist guides do it (Figure 3).

Figure 1: Provoke

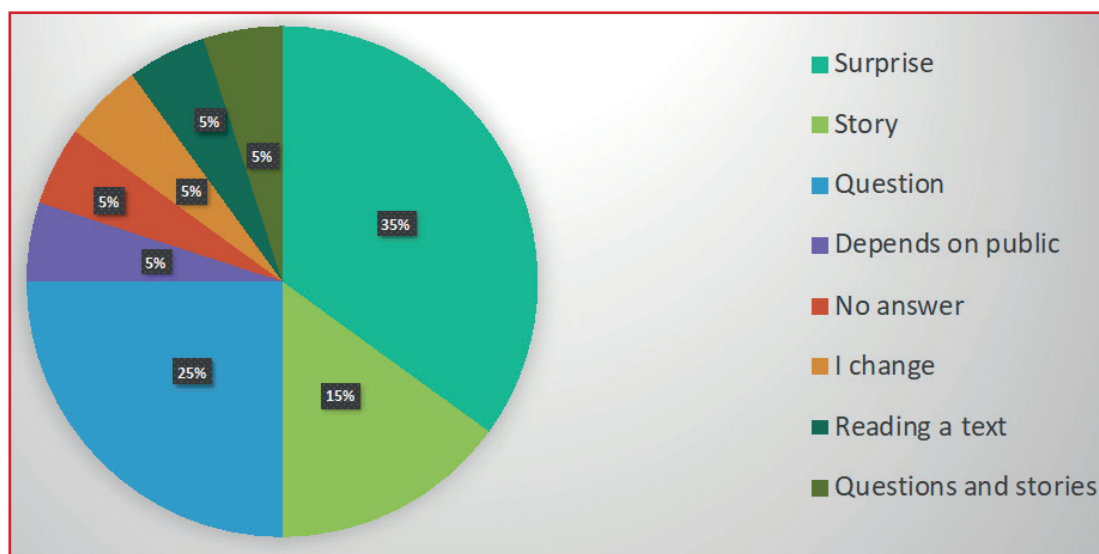


Figure 2: Relate

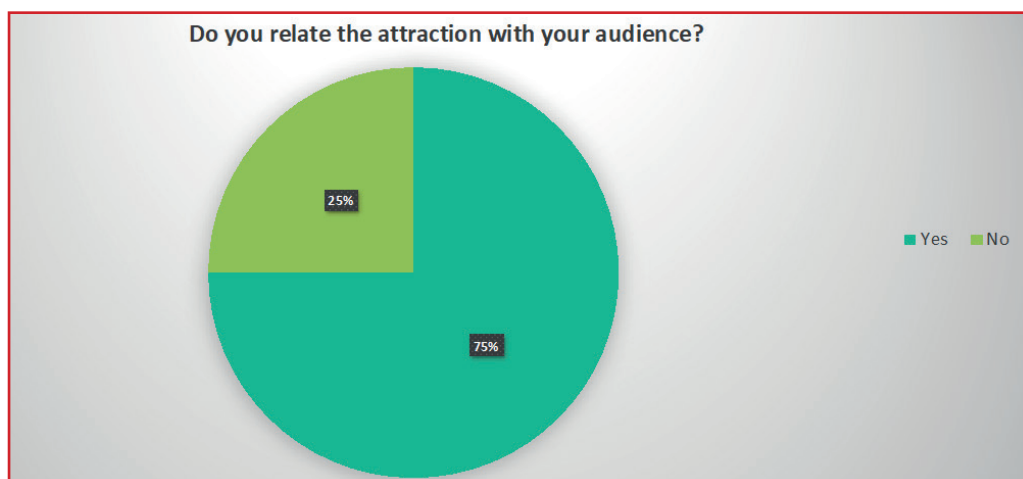


Figure 3: Reveal

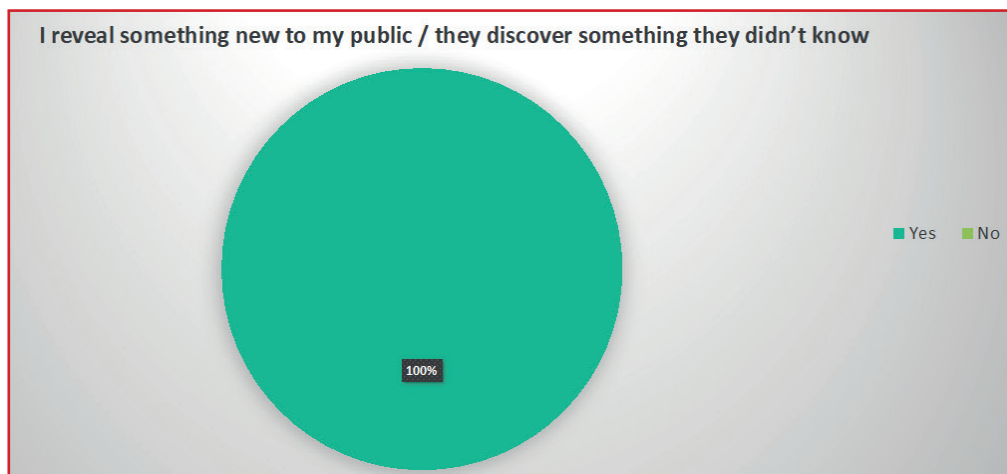
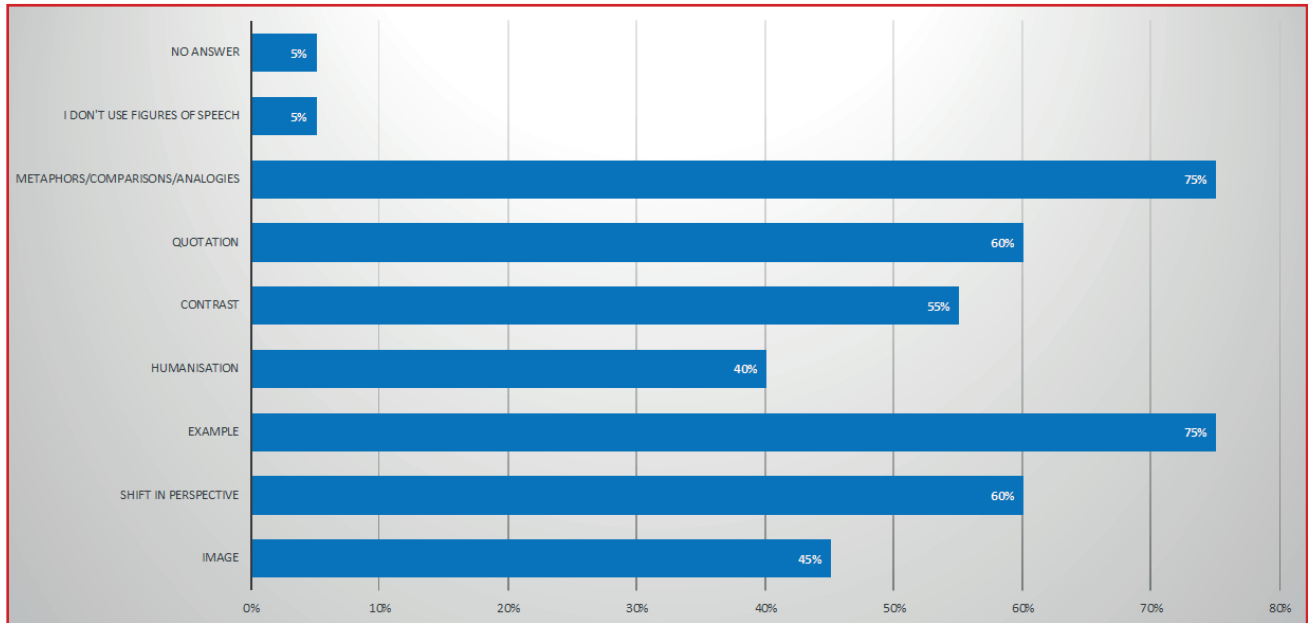


Figure 4: Use of Rhetoric



As shown in Figure 4, the use of rhetoric is well practiced by certified guides. This question is based on Thorsten (2013), who lists several figures of speech, such as the ones we see on the graphic. Questions were asked giving examples for each type of figure of speech so that the guides knew exactly what we were talking about. The answers clearly express the preferences of professionals as far as rhetoric is concerned: 75% of the guides prefer

to use metaphors, comparisons, analogies, and examples to illustrate their speech. Quotations and shift in perspective are also very common (60%), followed by contrast (55%), image (45%) and humanisation (40%). One guide states s/he does not resort to figures of speech, something that is hard to believe, and another one does not give any answer on the matter.

Figure 5: Humour

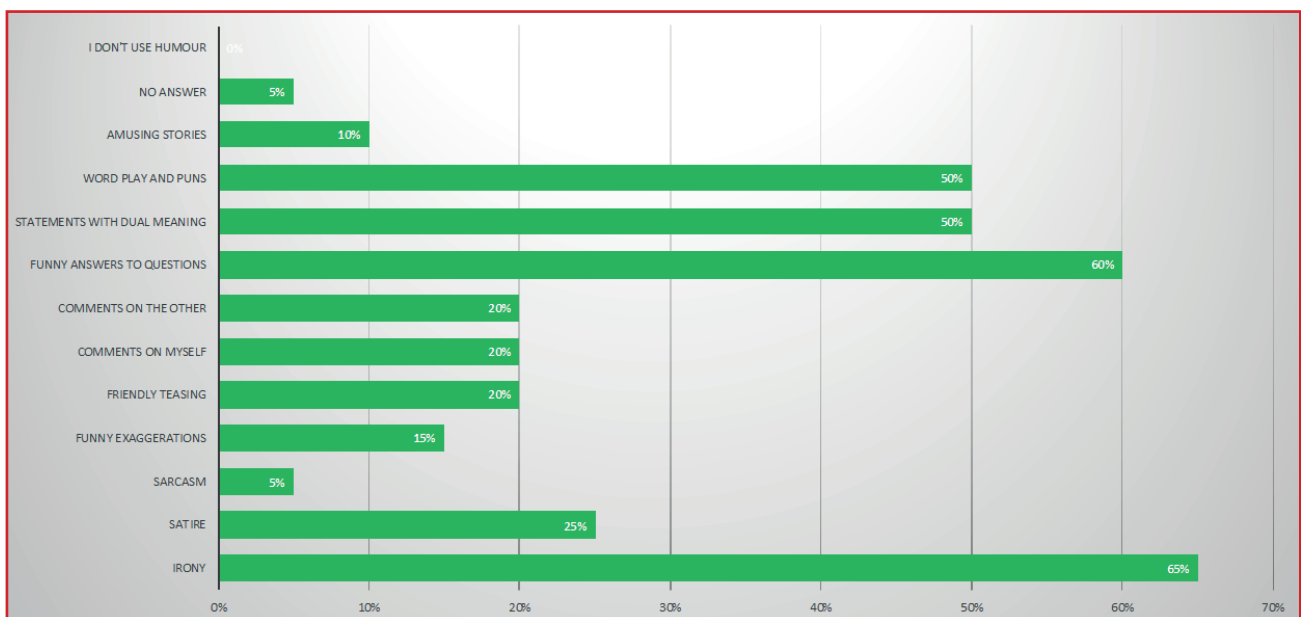
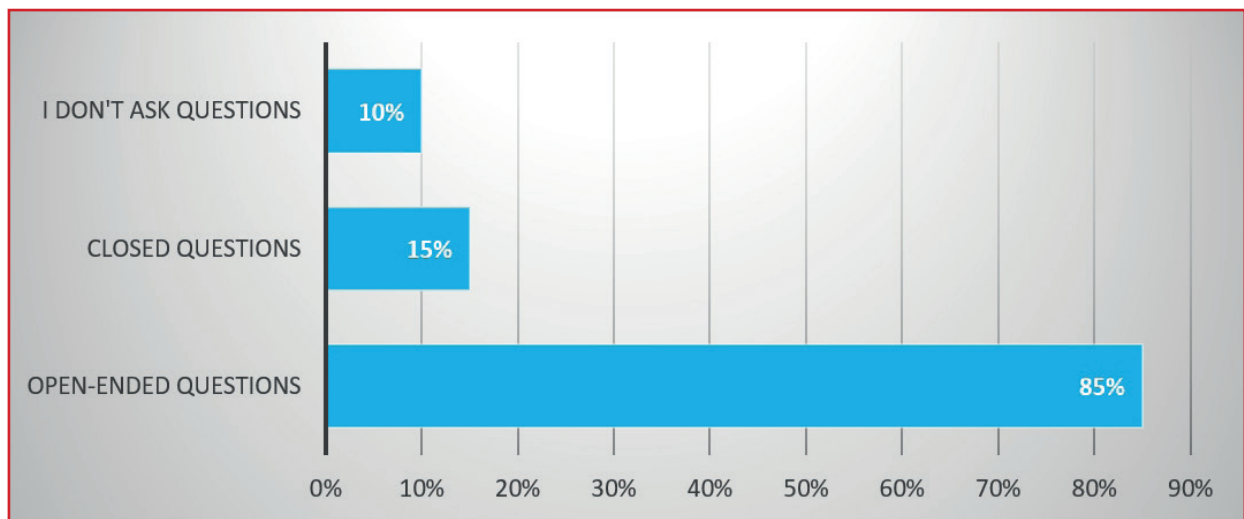


Figure 6: Questions



According to the collected data revealed in Figure 5, when talking about humour, irony (65%) and funny answers to questions (60%) are the most important weapons against boredom (Figure 5). Word plays and puns are much applied by guides, as well as statements with dual meaning, each of them with 50% of the guides admitting they make use of those forms of humour. What matters is that humour - and wit if we might add - are present in the tours and that guides are willing to entertain the public in addition to educating them. Surprisingly, amusing stories and sarcasm do not have much use among guides.

Besides rhetoric and humour, 85% of the guides also use open-ended questions in their presentations (Figure 6). On the other hand, they hardly use drama – 45% don't use it at all and 60% just imitate a character with their voice (Figure 7), and only one guide represents a character in the tour. On the other hand, they all do a lot of storytelling – 100% narrate true stories and 50% also convey legends or fiction (Figure 8).

It seems that most guides do not enjoy using drama. Maybe they do not want to step beyond the limit of propriety, as if they want to entertain but keep their status of 'street intellectuals' that they are. So, they will rather resort to storytelling.

Figure 7: Drama

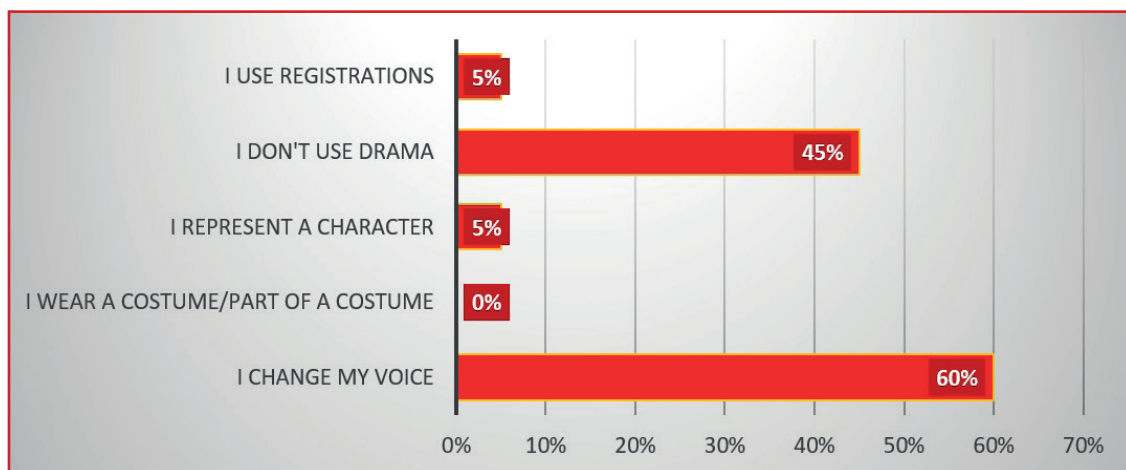
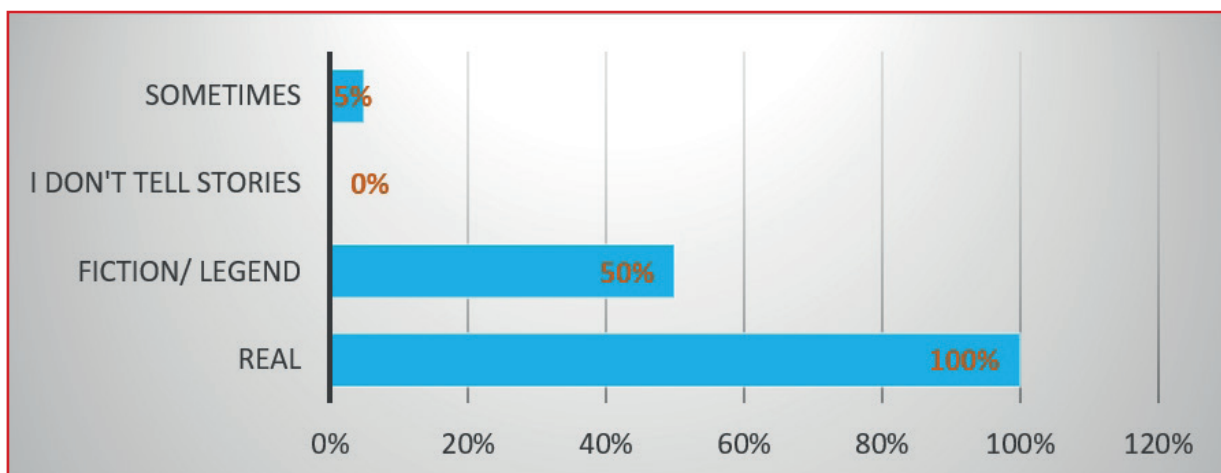


Figure 8: Storytelling



According to the respondents, use of the senses is quite common among tourist guides. The chart below (Figure 9) testifies that besides sight and hearing, smell (50%) is the main sense, followed by taste (40%) and touch (30%), but it is also interesting to notice that 1/4 of the guides state they do not make any use of the senses at all. In the tours attended, taste and smell were not used, but participants touched the trees and the buildings related to the descriptions of the guides. Since not all the tours were investigated, it is possible that the other senses might have been used.

Another important question is the use of props since lately they have become very common to illustrate the content being presented by tourist guides. According to Figure 10, the most popular props are photographs, drawings and postcards, which are used by 90% of the guides, whereas maps and schemes are used by 65% of the professionals. Books and notebooks are also quite popular (45%). All these props relate to sight, so they are used when it is not possible to show how or where something was like in the past. A particular word should be given to music since it is used by 5 guides in their tours, although only 2 tours are specifically about music.

Figure 9: The Five Senses

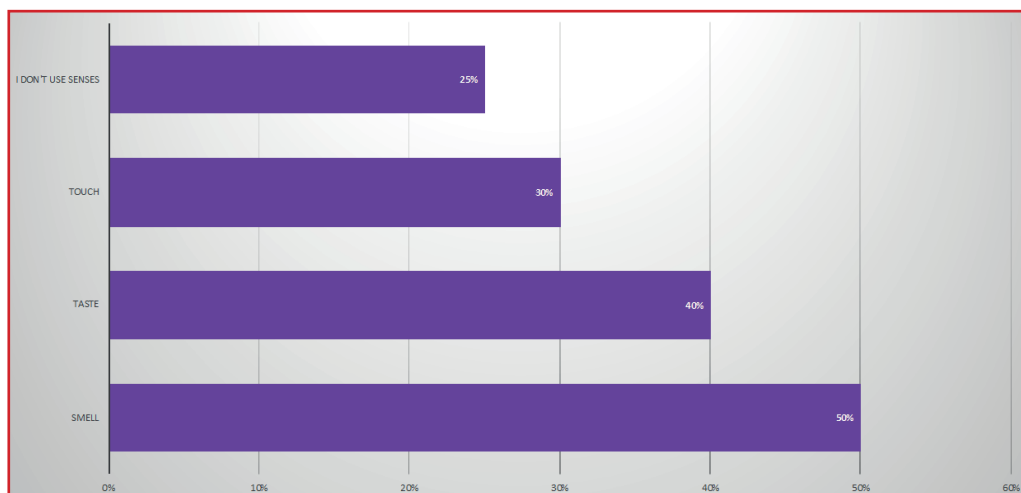
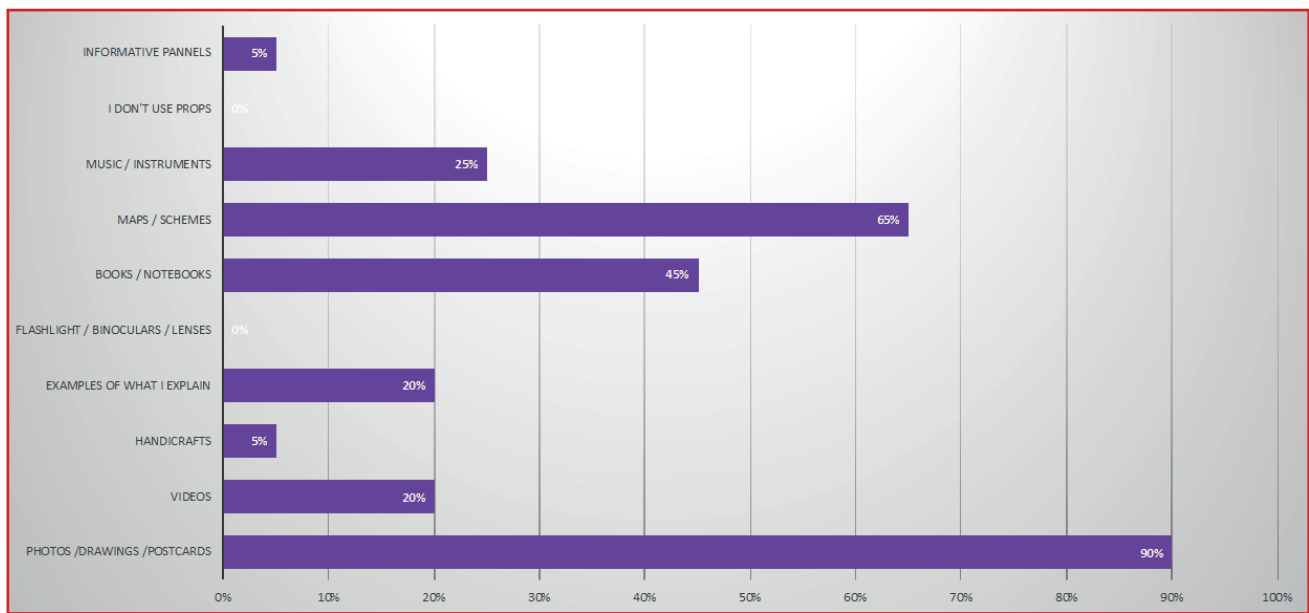


Figure 10: Props



Changing tangible into intangible elements is something common for tourist guides (Figure 11). At least 80% of them mention that they use this tool. Probably the other 20% are not aware of this interpretation technique and therefore maintain that they do not use it. Nevertheless, its common usage could be confirmed by participant observation.

According to Figure 12, 85% of the guides always or often invite their public to directly participate in the tour, whereas 15% declare they rarely do it. As Meged (2006) states, a tour is co-performed by the

guide and the tourist. So, when the participation of the audience is higher, the quality of the experience should also be greater.

Finally, guides were asked ‘what they wanted their visitors to take home’ (meaning what was the lesson they would think about in order to improve the world), and Figure 13 demonstrates that they are committed to values such as sustainability and social responsibility. Above all, guides want their clients to steward cultural heritage and to be inspired by their tour (both with 70%). They also want their clients

Figure 11: Changing Tangible into Intangible / Universals

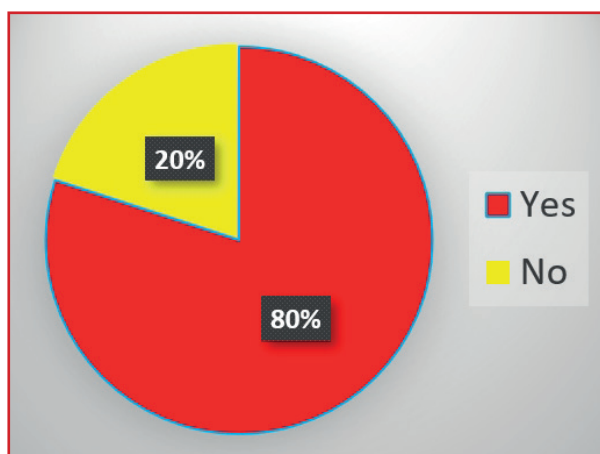


Figure 12: Audience Participation in Interpretation

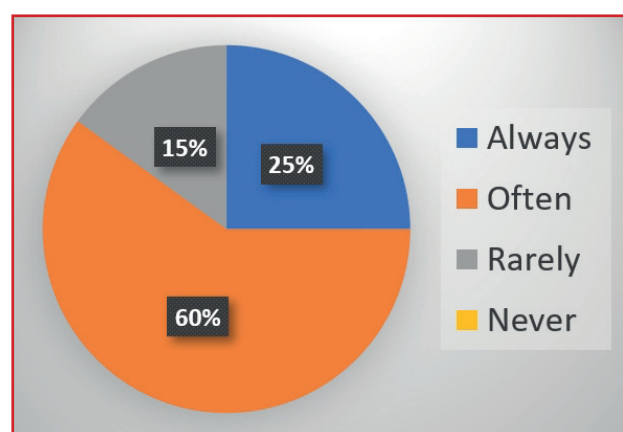
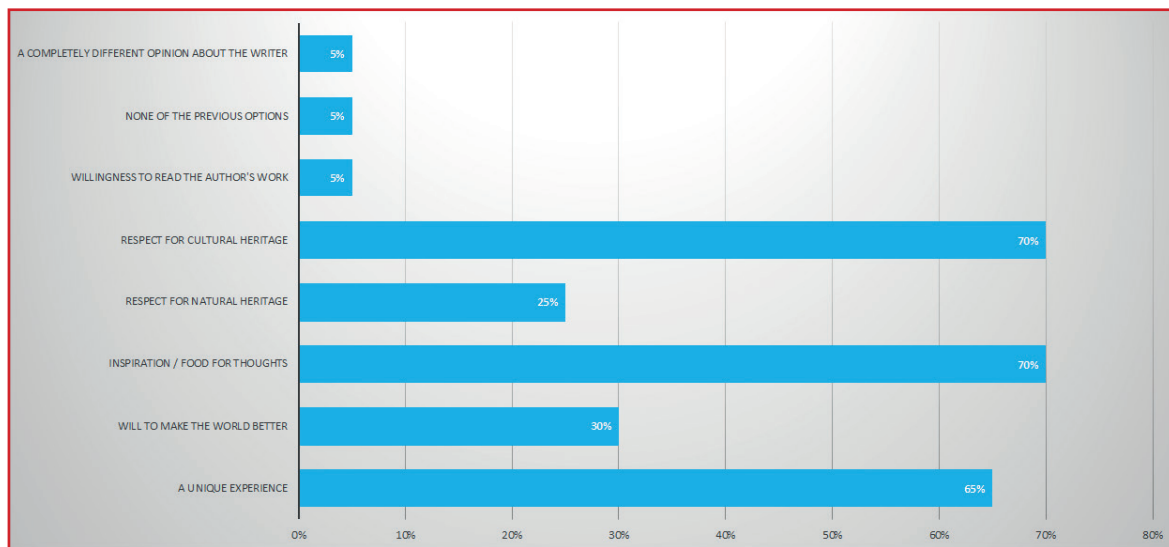


Figure 13: What guides Want Visitors to Take Home



to have a unique experience, or to feel something special during and after the tour. Nature only gets the attention of 25% of the guides, proving that culture comes before nature for these guides.

If we try to have a more holistic perspective about these graphics and the impressions they convey, we may reach the conclusion that generally the guides provide good quality interpretation to their tourists, using many different interpretation techniques –

Table 2: Key Survey Findings

Positive Findings	Negative Findings:
<p>Demographic data show that the guides who performed the walking tours have considerable experience in guiding. Most have been in the business for more than 21 years and they are mostly female, aged around 45 years old (or more). Only two guides are male.</p> <p>The audience is usually composed of Portuguese adults, and a large number of colleagues attend the tours out of curiosity, to learn and acquire more information, and also to support their peers in the difficult period of the pandemic.</p> <p>The walking tours tend to be long, since they last two or more hours.</p> <p>Lisbon guides prefer cultural topics and literature prevails.</p> <p>Tilden’s principles are generally used by the guides – they provoke their tourists, but they rather appeal to curiosity or surprise, either asking a question or telling a story.</p> <p>The most common interpretation techniques used by the guides are rhetoric, humour, questions, storytelling, intangible references, and props (mainly photographs and maps).</p> <p>There seems to be a certain concern about sustainability – guides state that they are worried with heritage preservation and customer behaviour change.</p>	<p>Guides can hardly express the theme of their tour – if we consider Sam Ham’s definition. They mix up the theme with the subject of the tour and therefore it seems that there is not a train of thought that leads the tour, but rather different parts placed together without a particular direction.</p> <p>Guides who have been working for many years, as is the case of the ones questioned here, never had deep contact with interpretation theory. They probably learned what they know mainly from experience and observation.</p> <p>The guides who were surveyed show creative skills and strive to innovate, however they are just a few – the sample is 20 guides out of 350.</p>

such as the basic ones (to provoke, relate and reveal), as well as rhetoric, questions and storytelling – but there are still many other skills which are low-rated and need to be improved – that is the case of several types of humour, drama, and the use of some useful props.

Conclusions

Bearing in mind the results and findings of this paper, we can reach the conclusion that there are both positive and negative aspects in the performance of the 20 tourist guides out of the 25 who were engaged in walking tours across Lisbon. Nevertheless, the sample represents 80% of the total universe.

The Key findings of the primary research are presented in Table 2, which focuses on the principal positive and negative outputs of the questionnaire. Taking this into account and if we consider the hypotheses conveyed in the methodology section, we can reach the following conclusions:

Hypothesis 1 – *tourist guides have a clear perception of what a theme is and attribute meanings to the facts* – is not confirmed. Many guides could not explain their theme because they do not use it as an interpretation tool, and they are more concerned with historic data (content) than with interpretation techniques (form).

Hypothesis 2 – *tourist guides use the basic principles of interpretation* – is confirmed. Tourist guides provoke the tourists and arguably make them think about the resources and their issues, they relate the resource to the tourist, and they reveal something new or unique to their visitors.

Hypothesis 3 – *tourist guides are aware of the interpretative techniques that are available to them* – is partly confirmed. In fact, they are pretty much aware of rhetoric, questions, and storytelling, but less aware of all the potential of humour, drama, and props.

Bearing in mind the post pandemic tourism trends in 2021, it is possible to assume that more nature-based walks are needed, and that guides should be more attentive to practices concerning eco-tourism. It is time to start planning walking tours out of the main towns and go to the outskirts, instead of staying in the metropolitan areas. There should be a wider variety of walking tours including different kinds of activities, according to the type and the age of tourists. Tours should include contemporary technology and gaming, and more direct participation of the tourists with several experiences included. Virtual tours may have an important role in promotion since the people who join them usually feel compelled to see the real places later. However, further studies are required in these areas.

Pereira (2015), Iriguler & Guler (2016:204) propose that guided tours are complex and exclusive services, since

‘tour guides’ experience, creativity, background and devoutness differ from each other; [therefore,] each tour is unique and personalized in nature’.

Besides the service quality that derives from their complex intellectual, interpersonal, intercultural, and technical competences, the contemporary certified tourist guides’ main strength is the reliability conveyed to visitors. As Carvalho (2020) indicates, the recovery of the tourist activity after the Covid-19 pandemic depends on several factors, among which, safety and reliability have become even more important assets to satisfy each customer’s demands. All in all, it is still the human touch that will make a real difference in the survival of quality tour guiding and interpretation, considering even the possibility that technology might evolve into the rather cloudy skies of robotic guides.

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Acronyms used in Paper

AGIC – Portuguese Tourist Guides and Tour Managers Association

FEG – European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

IE – Interpret Europe

NAI – National Association for Interpretation