

Секція 4. Теорія і методика професійної освіти

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION SKILLS IN THE PROFESSION OF A TOUR GUIDE

Today the industry of tourism remains to be highly profitable, the investment in which pays off quickly. The number of workers in the world tourism industry in 2018 was equal to approximately 760 million.

The most demanded in tourism industry are the highly qualified experts with the knowledge of foreign languages and, thus, are able to cooperate with foreign clients, make independent decisions in real situations, see the prospects and plan the strategy and tactics of the industry.

The Tourism Survey (2018) figures emphasize the fact that the profession of a tour guide is presently of high demand and importance in tourism industry. The research in tour guides' professionalism, unfortunately, has received little attention from the tourism academic community.

The **objective** of the report is to show the significance of communication and presentation skills in the process of training a professional tour guide.

Having analyzed the views of training the successful workers of tourism industry, the Ukrainian scientists claim that the real tourism expert has to be characterized by high professionalism, progressiveness, communicativeness, competitiveness in the labor market. All the features mentioned above can be found in the profession of a tour guide as a representative of the perspective and well-developed industry.

Summing up the definitions of the term "tour guide", offered by the world hospitality and tourism researchers, we conclude that *a tour guide* is a qualified expert of high culture who possesses the profound knowledge of the guided destination, foreign language proficiency and is skilled at directing and leading tourists on a sightseeing area.

In our report we use the term “professionalism”, which is defined as the acquired in the process of training and practical activity ability to competent performance of working functions; skill level in a certain kind of activity, which corresponds to the level of complexity of the tasks performed” (Merriam-Webster, 1997).

To serve the tourists well, language plays an important role in order to conduct communication. We stress that *communication skills* are of great importance in tourism and hospitality industry. Good tour guides have to know how to communicate efficiently and effectively. In many ways, a guide is the ‘facade’ of a business or company (O’Brien and Ham, 2012).

Professional tourist guides not only guide local tourists of their own nationality but also guide tourists who come from different countries. For this reason, they are expected to be fluent in at least one *foreign language*. Because, a tourist guide is the person who guides visitors in the language of their choice at the destination.

According to the European Reference Framework communication in foreign languages is one of the key competencies (ERF, 1986). It consists in the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read, understand and produce texts appropriate to one’s individual needs. A positive attitude involves the appreciation of cultural diversity and an interest in and curiosity about languages and intercultural communication.

The success of the tour guide is much dependent on the *effective communication* which is highly persuasive, demonstrates leadership and organization, and gives clarity to complex issues. According to O’Brien and Ham the reality is that “effective communication is a learned skill that requires significant preparation and practice.” The scientists state that a tour guide must learn to engage the audience not to lose their attention. Tour guides must learn how to make their presentations relevant to their audience so that they care, or can relate, and they must be organized so that they can efficiently communicate in very limited increments of time. The guides can provoke thought and interest in their guests which would “stay with them long after they go home” (O’Brien and Ham, 2012).

Much attention in the formation of tourist guide’s professionalism is devoted to the *presentation skills*. In training successful guides, course lectures and activities

focus on how to effectively present rather than memorize information. Training activities relevant to learning effective presentation skills such as body positioning, eye contact, tone, gestures etc. are the inseparable part of the acting mastery. Mossberg suggested that professionals in creative industries, such as actors trained in performance, could be useful in roles as educators, entertainers and value creators, and this may well be true of future tour guides (Mossberg, 1995).

We emphasize the fact that a tour guide must possess the ability to persuade, based on the knowledge of the auditorium, culture of speech, knowledge of the oratory. The *oratory* comprises the ability to structure the excursion material, message it to the listeners perfectly clear for comprehension by using verbal and non-verbal means of communication. The oratory is characterized by the richness of a guide's vocabulary; the correct use of word stress; grammar constructions; the proper choice of style; good pronunciation; artistic imagery – usage of various distinct language instruments: synonyms, epithets, metaphors, statements, idioms and proverbs; the avoidance of filler words. Non-verbal communication of a tour guide consists in the usage of body language including body posture, hand movements, gestures, facial expressions, skin coloring, usage of space and have a strong effect on effective communication. Tourist guides can use body language to make a positive impact and also understand group members better with deciphering their body language.

The analyzed skills contribute to the formation of the tour guide's professionalism. By skillful usage of means of speech, knowledge and methods of information presentation, engaging the auditorium in common topic capture, the tour guide transforms the excursion process into the creativity and art.

To **conclude**, tour guides in Ukraine are required to possess good knowledge of tourism product, interpersonal skills including English proficiency and the ability to offer quality services. Good interpersonal skills, mastering foreign languages and offering the quality standards are dependent on training.

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