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MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER'S THESIS
FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND TOURISM IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Ljubljana, July 2023

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Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my family, particularly my grandparents, for imparting their invaluable perspectives on the world, sharing their life experiences, and shaping me into the person I am today. I am also immensely grateful to my father for his constant encouragement to strive for excellence. His wealth of knowledge and willingness to share it has been a tremendous source of inspiration for me. I would also like to express my appreciation to my uncle, who has always been by my side, lending an ear to listen and providing me with valuable advice.

I also sincerely thank the EMTM program for providing me with this incredible opportunity to live and study in three different countries, fostering a diverse community of individuals from various backgrounds. I am incredibly grateful to my supervisor, Ljubica Knežević Cvelbar, for her invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and insightful advice when I felt lost.

The EMTM program has transformed my life, introducing me to remarkable individuals I now proudly call friends. Within this program, I also found my life partner in Kolding. Thanks to this extraordinary experience, I now reside in Germany, where I have found a strong sense of belonging and an incredible, loving, and supportive family — the Braun family.

I am deeply grateful for the warmth and acceptance they have shown me.

I cannot overlook my immense gratitude for all the participants who shared their experiences and opinions during the interviews. Their willingness to contribute to my study has shed light on the intricate factors we often overlook when making decisions.

Furthermore, I express my heartfelt appreciation to Sebastian for his unwavering presence during stressful moments throughout my research. His belief in my abilities and constant reassurance that I could overcome any challenges have been a source of strength for me.

Additionally, I am indebted to the environment I grew up in — a vibrant and international community — with supportive friends who have fueled my curiosity and instilled an insatiable desire to explore the world further.

I would also like to acknowledge Despina, with whom I embarked on this Master's journey, flying to Athens to meet her and fly together to Kolding. We lived side by side each semester and completed the Master's program together, concluding our time in Girona with a flight back to Athens, this time to spend Christmas with her family. She has become like a sister to me.

Last, I would like to recognize Raquel, whom I met in Denmark and who quickly became an essential part of my life. She has been my confidant, with whom I could share anything, and her perseverance and remarkable achievements have served as a model for me to follow.

Table of Content

Abstract.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Literature Review.....	6
2.1 Relevant Terms.....	6
2.1.1 Tourism Destination.....	6
2.1.2 Destination Choice.....	7
2.1.3 Destination Image.....	8
2.1.4 Tourist Expectation.....	9
2.1.5 Leisure Tourism.....	10
2.1.6 Language Barrier.....	10
2.1.7 Travel Motivation.....	11
2.2 Languages and Leisure Travel Decision: A Review of the Literature.....	13
2.2.1 Languages in Promotion.....	13
2.2.2 Foreign Languages in Tourism.....	16
2.2.3 Effects of Foreign Language Knowledge.....	19
2.2.4 Decision-Making Process.....	20
2.2.5 Factors that affect the Tourism Decision Process.....	24
2.2.6 Leisure Travel Decision.....	26
3. Methodology.....	28
3.1 Research Paradigm.....	28
3.1.1 Trustworthiness of the Research.....	30
3.1.2 Ethical Considerations.....	31
3.1.3 Exploratory Qualitative Approach.....	32
3.2 Research Method.....	33
3.2.1 Data Collection.....	33
3.2.2 Data Analysis.....	37
3.3 Limitations.....	38
4. Results and Discussion.....	39
4.1 Communication.....	42
4.1.1 Language Barrier.....	42
4.1.2 Influence of Language on Leisure Choice.....	44
4.1.3 Willingness to pay for better Communication.....	45

4.1.4 Benefits of speaking the Local Language.....	47
4.2 Travel Decision.....	48
4.2.1 Reasons for Domestic Travel.....	49
4.2.2 Travel Companions.....	50
4.2.3 Travel Motivation.....	52
4.2.4 Factors affecting the Travel Decision.....	52
4.3 Globalization and Evolution.....	55
4.3.1 English as a Global Language.....	56
4.3.2 Reliance on the Phone for Communication Assistance.....	57
4.3.3 Mentality.....	58
5. Conclusion.....	60
References.....	63

List of Figures

Figure 1 Thematic analysis themes.....	41
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List of Tables

Table 1 Interview subjects, date, and duration of the interviews.....	36
Table 2 Description of interview subjects.....	40

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview guide.....	79
Appendix 2 Interview transcripts.....	81

List of abbreviations

UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
EU	European Union
DMOs	Destination Marketing Organization

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the influence of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decision-making processes. In an increasingly interconnected world, effective communication and cross-cultural understanding are vital for successful interactions in tourism. However, the specific impact of language proficiency on leisure travel decisions has received limited attention in the existing literature. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the role of foreign language knowledge in shaping tourists' preferences and choices.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participants of varying nationalities and ages. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes in the collected data. The findings reveal that language proficiency does influence leisure travel decisions, even if participants may not consciously consider it. The ability to effectively communicate in a destination was preferred for a sense of security and the desire for cultural immersion and connection with the local community. Participants recognized the numerous benefits of communicating in the local language, and some participants expressed a willingness to pay more for a vacation, facilitating effective communication.

This research underscores the importance of language proficiency in fostering cross-cultural understanding and enhancing the overall tourist experience. The findings have implications for destination managers and marketers leveraging language to attract and satisfy tourists. By emphasizing cultural differences and promoting effective communication, destination managers can create more inclusive and engaging travel experiences for visitors.

Keywords: Foreign language knowledge, leisure travel, decision-making, destination choice, travel motivation

1. Introduction

Effective communication across cultures has become paramount in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. As a crucial tool for human interaction, language plays a significant role in facilitating communication and understanding among individuals from different linguistic backgrounds (Crystal, 2003). The impact of globalization has further emphasized the importance of cross-cultural communication as people from diverse cultures and nations increasingly interact and collaborate (Aririguzoh, 2022). Recognizing and respecting cultural differences is crucial for successful communication between individuals, as cultural biases can unconsciously affect the communication process and potentially lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings (Aririguzoh, 2022).

Globalization has significantly increased the demand for international travel to distant destinations (Keller, 2000). Furthermore, the global market expansion has allowed tourists to explore diverse cultures and societies, reflected in substantial growth of the international tourism industry, with overnight stays that reached 1.5 billion in 2019 (UNWTO, 2019a) compared to 612 million in 1997 (Keller, 2000). The global tourism industry fosters interactions among people who speak different languages, highlighting the vital role of language in enabling communication between tourists and locals and among tourists themselves (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). Despite increasing forces of globalization that bring about the integration of economies and cultures, language remains a fundamental aspect of cultural identity and communication (Raikhan et al., 2014). Recent research by Czepkiewicz et al. (2020) indicates a positive correlation between the number of languages spoken and the frequency of international travel. When making travel decisions, tourists seek information about their desired destinations and are influenced by the persuasive power of language (Irimiea, 2018).

Additionally, Keysar et al. (2012) found that using a foreign language reduces bias in decision-making, eliminating the "framing effect" inherent in choices made in the native language. The framing effect is a cognitive bias, showcasing how individuals' choices vary depending on whether the choice is presented as a loss or gain (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Foreign languages provide greater emotional distance, as they are less deeply ingrained in the individual's emotional system than native languages (Pavlenko, 2006). Furthermore, DePalma et al. (2006) highlighted that more than half of consumers only purchase on websites that present information in their native language. Therefore, it would be valuable to understand how language impacts decision-making for different nationalities and languages.

The linguistic diversity within Europe, with its 24 official languages, creates a fascinating dynamic where language proficiency levels vary across different nations (Alcántara et al., 2023).

English has emerged as the global language, facilitating worldwide social connections (Giddens, 1990). Crystal (2003) emphasizes its power in enabling effective communication across borders. However, Mejer et al. (2010) reveal an intriguing contrast to this linguistic dominance, as German and Russian emerge as Europe's most widely spoken languages. This contrast underscores the complex linguistic dynamics within the region, where English's global prominence coexists with the prominence of other languages.

Knowledge of foreign languages equips travelers with the necessary tools to engage with local communities, access authentic cultural experiences, and overcome language barriers, enhancing the overall travel experience. In an interconnected world, understanding the factors influencing individuals' travel choices and destination preferences is essential for various stakeholders, including the tourism industry, destination marketers, and policymakers. It allows them to cater to travelers' needs, develop effective marketing strategies, and contribute to sustainable tourism development. Investigating the influence of language proficiency adds a new dimension to understanding how language skills shape travelers' destination choices. By aligning destinations with travelers' motivations, destination marketers can better meet their expectations. Additionally, travelers proficient in foreign languages may prioritize different factors, have specific preferences, and hold different expectations when selecting their destinations. Language proficiency can influence their perceptions of a destination's cultural authenticity, comfort in unfamiliar environments, and interactions with locals.

The European tourism industry is witnessing a continuous surge in demand, with a rising influx of tourists visiting the region annually, as projected by UNWTO (Peeters et al., 2018). However, it is not just the quantity of tourists that is evolving; their consumption patterns and preferences are also undergoing significant transformations (Weston et al., 2019). Today's tourism consumers are increasingly discerning and sophisticated in their choices, driven by complex motivations and preferences (Weston et al., 2019). In this dynamic landscape, modern travelers seek unique, location-based experiences that align with their values and reflect their lifestyles (Peeters et al., 2018). Given the evolving trends in leisure travel, it is crucial to understand the various factors that influence travel decisions. A key factor to explore further is the impact of foreign language proficiency, as it empowers DMOs to attract appropriate visitors, curate inclusive experiences, and deliver targeted messages that align with the evolving preferences of modern travelers. Establishing effective communication channels is vital as it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of all stakeholders' diverse needs and requirements. This understanding guides tourists towards suitable destinations and ensures the development of desirable tourism experiences.

The research's motivation arises from the intersection of my professional experience and the theoretical perspectives encountered during my academic studies.

Growing up in an international environment characterized by a multilingual family and residing in the cosmopolitan town of Altea (Spain), I have been immersed in a diverse cultural environment. Remarkably, my social circle in Spain consists mainly of international acquaintances, with only a few Spanish friends. Moreover, being of mixed Dutch and Spanish heritage, I possess two distinct backgrounds, cultures, native languages, and perspectives. Despite being a popular tourist destination, Spain faces challenges regarding foreign language proficiency, whereas the Netherlands, a smaller country with a robust tourism industry, exhibits a higher level of multilingualism. This discrepancy raises questions regarding the necessity of language skills for the Dutch, who likely rely on other languages due to the limited use of their native tongue. Unlike Spain, the Dutch do not encounter significant communication barriers. Consequently, the choice of travel destinations may vary between the two groups. However, the study will focus on Europe in general, avoiding specific countries to cultivate a holistic view.

Through my extensive international experiences, including living in nine countries, studying at seven universities, and acquiring proficiency in seven languages, I have observed the profound influence of language on interpersonal interactions. Individuals' treatment of others undergoes a distinct transformation when communicating in their native language. This observation prompts me to inquire whether tourists know this dynamic and if it impacts their selection of travel destinations. Furthermore, I have encountered individuals who face communication challenges while traveling but persist in their exploration of new destinations, nonetheless. This raises the question of whether such experiences are every day or contingent upon the languages spoken. The persistent inquiry into the factors influencing destination choices, the varying travel patterns across different locations, and the implications of language proficiency have motivated me to undertake this thesis.

As a result, based on the knowledge gap on the impact of foreign language knowledge on travel decision-making and the combination of my motivation, this Master's thesis addresses the **research question**:

"How does foreign language knowledge impact the leisure travel decision?"

The primary objective is to explore foreign language proficiency's impact on leisure travel decisions. Furthermore, this research endeavor aims to generate valuable insights to enhance tourism management strategies, ultimately fostering sustainable development and inclusivity in the industry. The ultimate goal is to create an environment where language barriers do not serve as exclusionary factors for potential tourists. Therefore, this thesis research will be conducted in several European cities, incorporating diverse perspectives from various nationalities and levels of foreign language proficiency.

The qualitative interview method will serve as the primary data-gathering tool, employing semi-structured interviews to investigate participants' perspectives and experiences in tourism.

Subsequently, a thematic analysis will be conducted to identify recurrent and relevant themes that contribute to addressing the research question.

This study addresses a knowledge gap regarding the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decisions. Through an exploratory study of European citizens, utilizing qualitative data analysis, the research explores the dynamics between language competence and destination selection. The insights of this research can inform the development of targeted strategies to enhance travel decisions based on individuals' language competencies. Moreover, the research outcomes can guide the design of language learning programs, tourism marketing campaigns, and destination management initiatives. By incorporating the insights from this study, service quality, customer satisfaction, cultural exchange, perceived travel, and sustainable tourism development can be improved.

This Master's thesis is organized into five chapters. This first chapter, **Introduction**, establishes the rationale for conducting the research, discussing the role of languages, foreign language knowledge, and globalization in the context of tourism. It addresses the knowledge gap regarding the integration of languages in the tourism industry and presents the researcher's motivation in connecting the research problem with the study's context.

The second chapter, **Literature Review**, consists of two sections. It begins by establishing a framework for critical terms such as destination choice and travel motivation. Afterward, an overview of foreign languages in tourism is provided to contextualize the relationship between languages and tourism. The effects of foreign language knowledge on decision-making are explored, examining the general decision-making process and its influencing factors, specifically within leisure travel.

The third chapter, **Methodology**, outlines the research paradigm and theoretical stance that guide the thesis. The interpretive research paradigm and its ontological, epistemological, and methodological implications are explained. The research methods, including data collection and analysis tools, are described, and the limitations of the chosen methodology are addressed.

The fourth chapter, **Results and Discussion**, presents the analysis of the collected data, organizing it into relevant themes accompanied by quotes from the interviewees. The relationships between these themes are explored, and the researcher reflects on the significance of the findings and their contribution to the tourism literature.

The final chapter, **Conclusion**, summarizes the entire investigation and discusses how the research objectives were achieved. Additionally, recommendations for further research are presented, highlighting areas that warrant future exploration.

2. Literature Review

A systematic review of the related literature is an indispensable step for any research. This literature review explores foreign languages' effects on leisure travel decisions. In this chapter, related papers have been logically indicated and discussed within the scope of the study objectives. The chapter is divided into two parts. Accordingly, the **first part** comprehensively discusses relevant terms related to this study. The **second part** examines the relationship between languages and tourism and the connection between decision-making processes and languages. On the one hand, the review portrays the role of foreign languages in tourism and decision-making. On the other hand, it also identifies a research gap concerning how languages impact leisure travel decisions. Consequently, this section will analyze the most important and related papers on foreign language knowledge and the decision-making process.

2.1 Relevant Terms

This section aims to concisely present and discuss this thesis's definitions and exploration of key terms. The terms include tourism destination, destination choice, destination image, tourist expectation, leisure tourism, language barrier, and travel motivation.

2.1.1 Tourism Destination

The term "*tourism destination*" is widely used in the tourism industry, yet there are varying definitions of what constitutes a destination. Leiper (1995) initially defined *tourist destinations* as physical places where people travel and experience certain unique features contributing to their attractiveness. Additionally, destination attractiveness refers to tourists' opinions about a destination and its perceived ability to satisfy their needs (Vengesai, 2003). Other scholars, such as Framke (2002), further detail that a tourism destination is a geographical area with scenic and cultural features that can offer a tourism product, including many transportation facilities, lodging, food, and at least one significant activity or experience. Thus, destinations should respond to the basic travel demands to attract tourists. Communication is crucial in this process as destinations must satisfy tourists' communication needs by addressing them in their language. If tourists perceive that they cannot communicate, it may lead to a negative perception of the destination, ultimately affecting their decision to visit. According to Żemła (2016), Goeldner & Ritchie (2003) depicted one of the most influential definitions of a tourism destination, emphasizing that it entails a particular region where visitors enjoy several travel experiences.

Regarding physical space, Medlik (2003) defined "tourism destinations are countries, regions, towns, and other areas, which attract tourists, are main locations of tourist activity and tend to account for most of tourists' time and spending. They are the main concentrations of tourist attractions, accommodations, and other tourism facilities and services, where the significant impacts of tourism - economic, social, physical - occur".

On the other hand, The UNWTO (2019b, p.10) defined a *tourist destination* as "physical space with or without administrative or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight." This description provided by the UNWTO is general and encompasses all elements of a tourist destination, including tourism services, attractions, resources, and physical space. Moreover, a tourism destination can be a perceptual concept that consumers can interpret subjectively based on their travel itinerary, cultural background, the purpose of the visit, educational level, and experience (Buhalis, 2000). To effectively attract visitors, destination promoters must understand tourists' perceptions of a destination.

2.1.2 Destination Choice

As outsiders in a host society, tourists are temporary visitors who seek a change from their usual environment. When choosing a destination, tourists consider their tastes, preferences, and experiences to determine how much familiarity with the local culture they desire (Evans, 1976). Destination choice has been extensively researched, with scholars such as Pikkemaat (2004) and Omerzel (2006) investigating the factors influencing tourists' decisions.

Generally, two categories of factors influence destination choice: push and pull (Pikkemaat, 2004). Pull factors relate to the attributes of the destination itself, such as distance, infrastructure, and available activities (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Moreover, these factors can be tangible or intangible (Lam & Hsu, 2006), and language as an intangible factor plays a vital role in attracting tourists to a destination. Indeed, tourists may be drawn to a destination if they can effectively communicate with locals. In contrast, push factors refer to personal motives that drive individuals to travel, such as a desire for escape, novelty seeking, relaxation, or socialization (Lam & Hsu, 2006). The interplay between push and pull factors motivates tourists to choose a particular destination (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Consequently, tourism promoters should strive to align destination attributes with tourists' needs and desires to create a successful marketing strategy (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). Understanding the demand for tourism products can help destination marketers effectively communicate their message and persuade visitors to choose their destination.

Language plays a vital role in destination choice and promotion, and translation to the target language is essential. As many aspects of tourism are intangible, tourists mitigate the risks associated with destination choice by consulting various information sources (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Persuasion is a powerful tool in tourism promotion, and informational promotion provides potential tourists with information about the destination's characteristics, which can influence their decision-making (Molina et al., 2010).

A tourism destination is not merely a geographical space but also an essential element of the tourism market, encompassing demand and supply features (Żemła, 2016). On the supply side, tourism destination attributes describe a place as a tourism destination. On the demand side, tourists' sentiments and thoughts about a destination determine their satisfaction with their vacation experience (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Hence, tourists' intention to visit a destination is determined by their attitude toward the destination, their subjective norm about it, and their perceived control over the trip, as stated in "The psychological process of travel destination choice" (Qiu et al., 2018). Other studies, such as Lam & Hsu (2004), also support this statement highlighting the interplay between these three factors. Moreover, Alcázar et al. (2019) found that tourists with better knowledge of the local language experience more friendliness from locals. Therefore, tourists' understanding of the local language may also influence their destination choice.

2.1.3 Destination Image

To properly examine the concept of a tourism destination image, it is necessary first to understand the meaning of "*image*." While concepts such as brand image and company image are widely recognized, there is a need for a universal agreement on the term's meaning. However, a possible definition could be the perceptions and thoughts associated with an entity by one individual; more specifically, it is the simplification of reality, and any individual experience generates images in the mind (Enis, 1967). Defining the exact meaning of "destination image" is challenging, but several academics described it in numerous studies. According to Farias et al. (2013), "destination image is considered a set of complex mental impressions and real feelings that a potential tourist holds of a place or tourist destination." (p. 36). Consequently, each individual's thoughts of a destination differ, including their memories, associations, and imaginations of that place.

According to Kotler & Gertner (2002), images simplify associations and information pieces linked to a place. As a result, the destination image of a destination emerges as the mind attempts to process and select essential information from vast amounts of data concerning a place Kotler & Gertner (2002). Moreover, Image facilitates consumers' understanding of a company's product and service performance (Grönroos, 1990). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the destination image and leverage it to influence the traveler's choice.

Gallarza et al. (2002, p. 56) stated that "the importance of the tourist destination's image is universally acknowledged; it affects the individual's subjective perception and consequent behavior and destination choice." Language is part of the destination image; if a visitor has a memory of knowing about someone that had a good or bad experience communicating at the destination, it becomes part of the image he has of the destination and, consequently, influences the decision-making process. Dann (1996) also suggested that tourists are influenced by their country of origin, which shapes their interpretations of what they see.

Destination image is a critical aspect of tourism that warrants exploration. Destinations must promote their cities, countries, and places in a way that communicates the destination image to potential tourists to be successful (Kavoura, 2014). Accordingly, providing specific evidence on how foreign language knowledge impacts destination image and leisure travel decisions is noteworthy.

2.1.4 Tourist Expectation

Tourists often have preconceived expectations of service before they consume it. One possible definition of *expectation* is the consumer's prediction of future service outcomes (Higgs et al., 2005). Such expectations are based on information from advertising and word-of-mouth perceptions from other customers. Expectations of a repeat customer depend more on past experiences than information sources (Akama & Kieti, 2003). According to Rodríguez del Bosque et al., (2006), tourists' expectations are shaped by previous experiences, satisfaction levels, communication from the service provider, and the perceived service image. A negative experience, such as communication problems due to a foreign language at a destination, can significantly affect future decision-making.

Tourist expectations are preconceived perceptions of travel outcomes (Andereck et al., 2012). As Pocock (1992) asserts, "Expectation is a crucial component in the experience of a place." (p. 236). Therefore, understanding tourists' expectations concerning travel decisions is vital to effective destination management and marketing (Fallon, 2008). The image consumers have of a company affects their future expectations (Clow et al., 1997). In tourism, the destination image shapes expectations before the visit (Bigne et al., 2001). Thus, comprehending the expectations of tourists provides insights for developing the destination's attractiveness and enhancing tourism services.

While studies have examined how visitors' experience changes when they know the local language, the impact of language on the decision-making process should be acknowledged. As shown in the study by Keysar et al. (2012), languages are a part of the decision-making process and have an impact when making a choice. Accordingly, analyzing the language's influence is essential to attract tourists to a particular destination. Visitors who need to learn a foreign language may feel insecure as they may not communicate effectively at the destination.

In one of the most recent studies about languages and tourism, Carvalho (2021) examined how learning or improving language skills affects the travel experiences of individuals who travel for language-learning purposes. These trips allow travelers to interact with locals, learn about the culture, and improve their language skills.

The study (2021) reveals that knowing the language of the destination leads to a different experience, as the visitor engages with locals and gains a deeper insight into the local culture, which may only be possible with language skills. Even so, the exploration only considered the tourist's experience in the destination and tourists with language learning goals, leaving aside those who travel merely for leisure. It is important to note that locals who do not know a foreign language may pose a language barrier, which can deter visitors from choosing a particular destination.

2.1.5 Leisure Tourism

Leisure tourism constitutes a fundamental aspect of this research paper, as it is the only type of tourism analyzed in terms of its relationship with languages. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the meaning and implications of leisure tourism. Scholars from various fields, such as sociology and psychology, have proposed different definitions of leisure. However, the prevailing consensus describes leisure as the opposite of work. As a result, to describe work is to describe leisure (Venkatesh, 2006). Moreover, the human desire to have novel experiences and explore new places motivates people to travel, requiring them to step away from work due to the contrasting nature of work and leisure (Venkatesh, 2006). Therefore, although travel often incorporates leisure, tourism is often considered an extended leisure activity (Haywood et al., 1995). Additionally, Neal et al. (1999) have highlighted that tourism plays a significant role in leisure life, a notable characteristic of overall life satisfaction. Leisure travelers strive to break away from their daily routines and seek opportunities for psychological benefits (Iso-Ahola, 1982).

2.1.6 Language Barrier

Prior research consistently demonstrates that tourists prefer destinations where they can communicate in their language (Nagai et al., 2020). Therefore, lacking local language knowledge can be perceived as a barrier to international travel (Basala & Klenosky, 2001). Moreover, communicating in a familiar language can increase tourists' perceptions of safety (Pinhey & Iverson, 1994).

Language barriers often result in tourists experiencing incomprehension, and the attitudes of host communities towards tourists' attempts to speak their language can vary (Evans, 1976). Hence, connecting with the target audience becomes a challenge for destination managers (Agorni, 2012). Research indicates that language acquisition, even at a basic level, is crucial for developing cultural awareness and facilitating intercultural communication (Classen, 2007; Smith-Miller et al., 2010). Furthermore Hall-Lew & Lew (2014) have demonstrated that language learning is valuable for enhancing communication with locals and facilitating a deeper understanding of the local culture for foreign visitors.

Speaking the destination's language gives visitors a deeper understanding of the local culture, resulting in more authentic experiences (Classen, 2007; Smith-Miller et al., 2010). However, it is essential to recognize that tourists typically spend only a limited time at the destination and may not need to adapt to the local language (Carvalho, 2021). In most cases, locals adjust linguistically to accommodate visitors unless the tourism experience involves language tourism, where tourists actively adapt to the locals' language (Cohen & Cooper, 1986). Cross-cultural interaction can be facilitated through sign or trade languages, written translations, and bilingualism. Bilingual individuals often share bicultural values (Evans, 1976), indicating that those who speak multiple languages are more likely to understand one another.

Examining language barriers in tourism is an area of research that deserves more attention since language can significantly impact tourists' motivations, expectations, and choices. While numerous studies have explored language barriers in the medical field, the topic has received less attention in tourism. The inability to communicate effectively can be perceived as a language barrier that discourages visitors from considering a destination. However, if destination managers are mindful of this, they can develop strategies to persuade visitors to choose their destination, even if they do not speak foreign languages. Chen & Hsu (2000) suggested, "The fewer barriers tourists have, the shorter the decision-making procedure should be." (p. 414). Therefore, the absence of language barriers can positively influence tourists' decisions. However, Chen & Hsu's study (2000) was conducted on Korean tourists, which suggests that this assertion may differ for tourists from other countries. For instance, a tourist who lacks an understanding of a foreign language might consider it a significant obstacle to visiting a destination as he would require assistance or rely on translation tools to communicate. On the other hand, a tourist from a different country might not perceive language as an obstacle.

Language barriers may also arise when translating tourist texts, presenting two distinct challenges (Agorni, 2012). Firstly, if the destination's culture is emphasized strongly, tourists may require assistance comprehending unfamiliar information. Secondly, if the destination seems too familiar, it may lose its sense of novelty. Therefore, translated texts should strike a balance between presenting information in an accessible yet appealing manner, and cultural differences should be highlighted or downplayed depending on the target.

2.1.7 Travel Motivation

Travel motivation is an essential factor and pushing force behind tourist behavior (Crompton, 1979). However, fully understanding tourists' motivations remains a challenge for tourism researchers. Gaining insight into travel motivations allows a better understanding of tourists' needs, enabling more personalized services. According to Jang & Cai (2002), one of the most influential motivation theories researchers use is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1970).

Mill and Morrison (2002) state that motivation occurs when an individual wants to satisfy a need, and according to Maslow (1970), all human needs can be arranged into five categories. The pyramid's base is physiological needs; then, in ascending order, the following needs are safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and on top of self-actualization.

In the tourism context, these needs can be associated with various aspects of travel (Yousaf et al., 2018). The basic requirements that tourists expect destinations to fulfill are physiological needs, such as access to food, water, and accommodation. Safety needs involve providing a secure environment for travelers and ensuring their well-being during their journey and stay. The desire for love and belongingness can be met by developing relationships with family and friends and experiencing a sense of familiarity with the destination. Self-esteem needs relate to the social recognition and status individuals can attain through travel experiences. Lastly, self-actualization needs are associated with personal growth, skill development, and the pursuit of unique experiences that create a sense of fulfillment.

Generally, individuals try to fulfill a higher-order need once a lower-level need has been satisfied (Maslow, 1970). However, there are cases when a higher-level need predominates in an individual's mind when lower-level needs have not been met (Maslow, 1970). Pearce (1982) suggests that destinations attract tourists because of the possibility of fulfilling self-actualization, love and belongingness, and physiological needs in that order of importance.

Simkova and Holzner (2014) highlight the close relationship between psychological patterns and travel behavior, emphasizing the importance of understanding individuals' psychological needs and motivations in the context of travel. Additionally, Um and Crompton (1992) define motivations as critical factors inspiring individuals to visit different destinations. Crompton (1992) further emphasizes the desire for a break from routines and relaxation as significant factors in travel decision-making. Dann (1981) further suggests that tourists' state of mind influences their decision to travel.

While numerous studies have focused on tourists' motivations to travel, further research is needed to explore the relationship between travel motivations and destination choice. Scholars such as Coltman (1989) and Turnbull and Uysal (1995) have established a connection between travel motivations and destination choice. Consequently, it becomes imperative for destination development and marketing activities to be strategically designed based on factors that distinctly motivate travelers toward specific destinations. Moreover, there is currently limited research on how language proficiency influences tourists' motivations to visit specific destinations. Specifically, the impact of not speaking foreign languages on travel motivation has been underexplored. Further investigation into the relationship between language proficiency and travel motivation is warranted to understand this critical aspect comprehensively.

2.2 Languages and leisure travel decision: A Review of the Literature

This section comprehensively reviews the literature on the relationship between languages and leisure travel decisions. The aim is to provide a holistic understanding of how language knowledge influences various aspects of the decision-making process in tourism. Different dimensions of the language-travel nexus focus on critical areas that shed light on the significance of languages in leisure travel decision-making. The following subsections present a systematic analysis of relevant studies: languages in promotion, foreign languages in tourism, effects of foreign language knowledge, decision-making process, factors that affect the tourism decision process, and leisure travel decision.

2.2.1 Languages in Promotion

Irimiea (2018) explored the interplay among language, tourism, and sociology and emphasized the critical role of language in shaping tourists' experiences. Tourists heavily rely on language to develop expectations about their travel experiences, and these expectations become the basis of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their vacation (Irimiea, 2018). Before making their travel decisions, tourists acquire information about their intended destinations and are attracted to these places through the persuasive power of Language (Irimiea, 2018), which has two effects. Firstly, each individual creates images from the information provided and thus their expectations. When those do not mesh with the promises of the language of tourism, they complain (Dann, 1996). Secondly, if a tourist is satisfied, he becomes a destination promoter (Dann, 1996).

Modern-day tourists are sophisticated, educated, independent, and flexible, requiring customized promotional approaches for different market segments (Cho & Fesenmaier, 2001). Dissatisfaction arising from a gap between expectations and experiences often leads to complaints, while positive experiences promote a destination (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). To bridge this expectation-experience gap, tourists seek comprehensive information about their destinations, with the Internet being a primary source (Buhalis & Laws, 2001). However, Irimiea (2018) focused on the role of language in shaping tourist experiences and attracting tourists to destinations.

Language plays a crucial role in enhancing the element of persuasion and attractiveness (Salim et al., 2012). The language used in tourism promotion is designed to be compelling and attractive to persuade potential tourists to become actual tourists (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Breuer & Naphtine, 2008). Despite the importance of tourism promotion, only a few studies have investigated the language used in tourism promotion on websites and blogs, and the research done by (Salim et al., 2012) analyzed tourism websites in Southeast Asia, which may limit the generalizability of their results to other populations.

Hudson and Ritchie (2006) also identified a considerable relation between films and tourism success, underscoring the significance of language and image elements in promotion destinations. However, research on how language and images enhance tourism promotion is limited (Salim et al., 2012). Dore and Crouch (2003) argue that promotion programs are among the most influential media for promoting tourism. Hvass and Munar (2012) found that social networks are a promotional tool that allows tour operators to interact with their clients. Choi et al. (2007) suggested that promotional media provide essential destination knowledge and that websites, brochures, magazines, and other promotional materials influence travelers' decision-making. The media is critical in business activities, including tourism (Locksley, 2009). However, the studies did not specifically address the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decisions.

Advertising is another essential aspect of communication that can significantly influence attitudes toward products or services (Salim et al., 2012). Advertisements' persuasive and informative values make them essential artifacts affecting daily life and consumption (Pajnik & Lesjak, 2002; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). As a result, there is a growing interest in investigating advertising, particularly regarding language use, visual images, and persuasion (Salim et al., 2012).

According to Salim et al. (2012), advertising is an excellent example of a persuasive strategy that can be demonstrated through language. It plays a critical role in stimulating ideas and developing interest. While previous investigations have primarily analyzed printed means of tourism promotion, such as brochures and guides, web pages contain much information about the destination that requires more attention in research (Salim et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Loda (2011) highlighted the persuasive effects of websites and the effectiveness of marketing a destination. Therefore, the study observed that language and visual images create message credibility, and keywords are essential in valorizing the destination and capturing potential tourists.

Researchers such as Priester and Petty (1995) explored persuasion in tourism and analyzed how the verbal message reflects persuasion. Similarly, Salim et al. (2012) investigated the language in tourism and how information can be expressed to tourists. However, the impact of foreign languages on the persuasion of potential tourists remains an exciting research topic, as language affects decision-making. As a result, advertising in a foreign language could persuade tourists to visit a destination they may not have considered otherwise.

The tourism industry must provide tailored information to the target audience to promote the same product to different markets (Buhalis & Laws, 2001). Therefore, the language must be adequate and convincing, as language is highly persuasive in selling a product by describing a reality that potential visitors must perceive. As Buhalis and Laws (2001) explained, promotion can create the illusion of experiencing a destination before visiting it.

Tourism discourse revolves around authenticity, with tourists seeking unique and unfamiliar experiences. Cohen (1972) notes that tourists are attracted to places different from the familiar ones they are accustomed to. MacCannell (2013) further emphasizes the importance of authenticity in tourism. Maci (2007) conducted a study analyzing English texts from web pages of tourist offices to explore how language is used to create a sense of authenticity and exclusivity in readers. The study (2007) found that favorable terms, such as "untouched," "exotic," "remote," and "exclusive," are utilized to convey diversity and authenticity. Imperative verbs are also frequently used to create urgency and excitement, with promotions using "can" and "will" to communicate certainty and possibility with the subject "you," establishing a direct relationship with the audience.

Gotti (2006) notes that consciousness is an effective verbal strategy for creating persuasive language. Moreover, creating a personal relationship between the communicators generates successful persuasive text (Cogno & Dall'Ara, 1994, p.228). However, it should be noted that Maci's study (2007) was limited to English web pages, and results may only apply to specific populations, as different countries may use distinct languages that cater to other behaviors and reactions of tourists.

DePalma et al. (2006) conducted a study on consumer preferences in online shopping concerning language and found that most people prefer to buy products and services in their language. More than half of consumers only buy from websites that present information in their native language. This preference is even more crucial for high-valuable items. Even those comfortable with English may prefer to buy into their language. While English websites attract many visitors, people with limited English skills tend to buy less frequently. The French are one nationality that tends to avoid English websites, spending almost 90% of their time on French websites. Regarding booking services, people especially want information in their language. However, it is about more than just providing information in the local language; there must also be a facility to book the service. It is noteworthy that Spain is the country that tends to buy more from websites in languages other than its own (DePalma et al., 2006). However, it is essential to acknowledge that this study may not fully represent the global population as it only focused on a limited number of countries, did not account for other factors that may affect consumer preferences, such as cultural differences and personal experiences, and was conducted in 2006, while the shopping landscape has significantly evolved.

According to Wegner (2004), most thought processes occur unconsciously. Travelers may be unaware of multiple elements that emerge in a destination. Other academics, such as Adaval and Wyer (1998), found that visitors prefer events to be narrated rather than presented as lists of pros and cons. As consumers tend to remember and prefer stories over other forms of communication, marketing strategists can benefit from incorporating storytelling research in their strategies and communications (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Wegner, 2004).

2.2.2 Foreign Languages in Tourism

In today's interconnected world, globalization has significantly changed various aspects of society (Steger, 2017). The spread of individualistic and Capitalistic ideologies, technological advancements such as the telephone, and geopolitical conflicts have facilitated the rapid transfer of culture and language across countries and continents (Steger, 2017). These factors have played a role in facilitating the exchange of ideas, values, and linguistic influences, leading to increased interconnectedness and cultural diffusion on a global scale. However, the impact of globalization on tourism has received limited attention in existing literature (Bianchi, 2002; Wahab & Cooper, 2001).

Once solely a means of communication, language has assumed a more profound cultural and distinctive role among individuals (Watson, 2016). Recognizing the interplay between language, culture, and personal experiences promotes an inclusive perspective emphasizing equal importance and equitable distribution of all languages worldwide (Watson, 2016). While colonization has accelerated language change by disseminating dominant languages globally, it has also led to the global unification facilitated by globalization, negatively affecting linguistic diversity and language preservation efforts (Watson, 2016). Learning widely spoken languages like English, Spanish, or Portuguese in a global economy often holds more advantages than preserving less commonly spoken languages (Watson, 2016).

Furthermore, communication has undergone a profound transformation due to the emergence of new technologies (Shabir et al., 2015). Throughout the twentieth century, advancements such as the telephone, radio, film, television, and electronic mail have revolutionized the transmitting and receiving of information, making communication more observable and widespread (Shabir et al., 2015). The rapid progress in information technologies, including the advent of satellites, mobile phones, and the internet, has further accelerated the spread of communication, leading to the emergence of an information society (Sharma, 2004).

Globalization has brought about multifold changes. It has increased linguistic diversity and language dissemination, transformed communication through technological advancements, and underscored the significance of learning globally prevalent languages for effective global interactions.

As Giddens (1990) and Crystal (2003) noted, English has emerged as the global language facilitating communication across diverse cultures and regions. In a globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in widely spoken languages has become increasingly beneficial for individuals in various spheres of life (Crystal, 2003).

The tourism industry operates worldwide and consequently requires the use of multiple languages. Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) have pointed out that languages are ubiquitous in tourism and are integral to the tourist experience. Irimiea (2018) explored the crucial role of language in tourism, specifically focusing on its relationship with the English language and its connection to tourism and sociology. The development of English language instruction for tourism purposes has led to the recognition of the language of tourism as a specialized language. Researchers such as Hollinshead (1999), Selwyn (2018), and Dann (1996) have reached a consensus that tourism has its unique language. Dann (1996) has highlighted that the persuasive function of language is used in tourism promotion to satisfy the consumer's needs. In his seminal work (1996), Dann claimed that the language of tourism attempts to entice and influence individuals to become tourists by controlling their attitudes and behaviors through various media such as pictures, brochures, and other promotional materials. Although some studies have explored the linguistic features of tourism promotion, tourism has not been studied as a language. Moreover, scholars like Fishman (1971) and Hymes (1997) emphasize the influence of social context on language usage, considering factors such as speaker identity, setting, and language dynamics. These contextual conditions shape individuals' emotional relationship with language and, consequently, impact decision-making processes.

According to Mejer et al. (2010), English is the most studied foreign Language in Europe, followed by French, German, Russian, and Spanish. However, while English is the most widely taught foreign language at schools, and most people state that they command it the best, German and Russian are the most spoken foreign languages. There is a correlation between education level and language proficiency, with persons with higher education levels being more proficient in foreign languages. The Nordic countries, Slovenia, Belgium, Estonia, and Slovakia, have the highest number of people speaking foreign languages. Countries with low averages include Hungary, Romania, and Spain. More than 33% of adults between the ages of 25-64 state that they do not know any foreign language, while 28% claim to speak two or more foreign languages. At the European level, the proportion of people who said they were proficient in their best foreign language was twice as high in the 25-34 age group than in the 55-64 group. Eastern European countries show the most negligible differences in proficiency levels between the age groups due to the combined effect of an older population speaking Russian and the younger generations reporting relatively high English proficiency levels.

However, a more recent study by Duraj et al., 2018 suggests that the popularity of these languages has started to shift in recent years. Duraj et al., 2018 found that while English remains the most widely studied Language in Europe, the popularity of French and German has declined. In contrast, the study found an increase in the popularity of Spanish and Chinese, reflecting the growing economic and cultural importance of Latin America and China. The study also found that Polish and Portuguese have gained popularity as second foreign languages, especially among learners from Eastern European countries. According to Eurostat (2018), 65% of Europeans know at least one foreign Language. In some countries, foreign language knowledge is exceptionally high, such as Sweden at 97%, Latvia, Denmark, and Lithuania at 96%, Luxembourg at 95%, Finland and Malta at 92%, and Estonia at 91% (Eurostat, 2018).

The EU is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity, and the 24 officially recognized languages are essential to its cultural heritage (Alcántara et al., 2022). Nationals of the EU have the right to use any official language to communicate with the EU institutions, and those must reply in the same Language (European Union, n.d). One of the EU's founding principles is multilingualism, which aims to communicate with its citizens in their languages, protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity, and promote language learning in Europe. Learning foreign languages has traditionally been associated with an openness to other European cultures. However, in contemporary EU discourse, multilingualism is emphasized for its importance in economic growth, competitiveness, labor mobility, and employability (European Commission, 2012). On the one hand, Mastery of a foreign language is crucial to professional and learning mobility and national and international employability. On the other hand, poor language skills significantly hinder workers' free movement and EU companies' international competitiveness. The benefits of improving language learning go beyond the immediate economic advantages, encompassing cultural, cognitive, social, civic, academic, and security aspects (European Commission, 2012).

Language facilitates communication within tourism organizations and management (Andersen & Rasmussen, 2004). It is also recognized that effective tourism organizational management is partly dependent on the use of language, particularly in the form of promotional materials, instructions, and other written communications (Bloch, 1995). Language is spoken or written symbols conveying ideas, emotions, and experiences (Daft & Wiginton, 1979). By understanding the role of language, destinations can improve coordination skills (Karsten, 2006; Chen et al., 2006), increase customer satisfaction, and improve overall management practices in the tourism industry, which in turn motivates international tourists and enhances understanding of their cultural demands (Dickson & Huyton, 2008). Language also plays a critical role in effective communication, as individuals cannot comprehend what others demand if they cannot converse on their terms (Domke-Damonte, 2001). As such, language contributes to greater interest and significantly influences competitiveness (Maclean, 2006).

The existing literature discusses the role of language in tourism, highlighting that it is ubiquitous and integral to the tourist experience. They explore the unique language of tourism and how it attempts to persuade and influence individuals to become tourists. Mejer (2010) also discusses the most studied foreign languages in Europe, their relationship with tourism, English being the most widely taught foreign language, and the importance of multilingualism in the EU regarding cultural diversity and economic growth. However, the studies have some limitations. They need to provide a detailed analysis of the unique features of the language of tourism or explore the linguistic aspects of tourism promotion. Furthermore, researchers need to critically analyze the impact of language proficiency on the tourism industry, particularly regarding customer satisfaction, tourist experience, destination choice, and destination management.

2.2.3 Effects of Foreign Language Knowledge

The correlation between language and cognition has been extensively studied by linguists, with Sapir (1921) proposing that language shapes how individuals perceive the world. Chomsky (1957) further studied language and communication, focusing on language production. In contrast, the social approach, as proposed by scholars like Fishman (1971) and Hymes (1997), emphasizes the significance of the social context in language use, including the identities of the speakers, the setting, and the way language is used. Moreover, Fishman (1971) and Hymes (1997) argue that first language acquisition is influenced by contextual conditions, such as the social identities of the individuals involved in the interaction. This leads to an emotional relationship with language and subsequent effects on decision-making.

Keysar et al. (2012) examined the foreign language effect through four experiments to understand how using a foreign language affects the overall decision-making process. The findings revealed that using a foreign language reduces bias in decision-making because the "framing effect" disappears when choosing between options in a language other than the native language (Keysar et al., 2012). The framing effect was originally identified by Tversky and Kahneman (1981). It is one of the most notable cognitive biases in which people respond differently to a given choice depending on whether it is a loss or gain (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). In the experiments of Keysar et al. (2012), participants showed risk aversion when they had options in their native language. However, this manipulation did not influence their decision-making with options in a foreign language. Additionally, using foreign language diminished loss aversion by increasing acceptance of bets with a positive expected value. The authors (2012) suggest that these effects are due to a significant cognitive and emotional distance from the foreign language compared to the native language but no influence of this manipulation in a foreign language.

Many individuals use more than one language in their daily life to communicate. Generally, the second language is less mastered than the mother tongue (Perani & Abutalebi, 2005) which might have implications in the decision-making process. A foreign language can provide greater distance as it is less ingrained in the emotional system than a native language (Pavlenko, 2006). When people completely understand the meaning of words, slogans, or expressions, they respond less emotionally to them in a foreign tongue, as evidenced by several authors such as Dewaele (2004): and Puntoni et al. (2009). According to Sloman (1996) and other academics, thinking and reasoning concern two processes: analytical, methodical, instinctive, and effective. Using a foreign language is more challenging, diminishing the ability to rely on more systematic processes, which might increase cognitive load and dependence on intuitive and affective processes. If the lowering in systematicity is correct, using a foreign language should intensify judgment biases deriving from affective and heuristic processes. On the contrary, foreign tongues could have the opposite effect, causing people to trust even more systematic procedures and decreasing decision biases (Sloman, 1996). Lowering emotional reactions could mitigate the effect of affective procedures and permit individuals to depend reasonably on analytical processes when making judgments (Sloman, 1996). A more cognitive reference for distancing is that a foreign language is generally processed less automatically than a mother tongue, which leads to more conscious processing (Favreau & Segalowitz, 1983). Such an intended reaction could impact overall processing and result in more routine decisions. Sloman (1996) and Favreau and Segalowitz (1983) show that using another language drastically lessens the asymmetry of gains and losses in risky choices resulting in frame-independent decisions. The investigations illustrate that employing a foreign tongue eradicates the framing effect and does not rely on a particular native or foreign language. The most crucial process might be lessening emotive resonance while utilizing a foreign language. Emotions are essential in decision-making (Naqvi & Bechara, 2006). These findings are relevant because when it comes to persuading the visitor, a foreign language can influence the decision-making moment of a destination.

Nevertheless, the authors do not address the potential differences in the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decision-making across different languages or language families. It may be relevant to consider whether knowing a language from a particular country or region impacts the travel decision more than knowing a language from another area.

2.2.4 Decision-Making Process

The travel demand has proliferated in recent decades, leading to a rapid transformation of the travel industry and an increased focus on decision-making processes (Hudson et al., 2001). Selecting a travel destination is a complex process, influenced by multiple determinants that determine the progression of a destination from one stage to the next, ultimately leading to its selection. Thus, understanding the destination choice processes of tourists is a fundamental issue from both an academic and destination management perspective.

Various authors, such as Plog (1974), Moutinho (1987), and Um and Crompton (1990), have explored the psychological behavior of tourists during the travel decision-making process, identifying cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors that influence destination choice. However, the reasons for rejecting a destination have yet to be thoroughly examined before the final decision.

Decision-making involves evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each possible outcome and selecting the most appropriate option to achieve the desired objective. The classical concept of decision-making proposed by Edwards (1954) posits that individuals collect and analyze information to select an optimal solution from various alternatives. Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and regret theory (Loomes & Sugden, 1982) address the limitations of this classical model by incorporating risk and uncertainty. Bounded rationality (March & Simon, 1958) offers a more realistic view, arguing that individuals make good enough rather than optimal decisions due to constraints such as time, cognitive ability, and incomplete information (March & Simon, 1958).

Moutinho (1987) noted the role of social influences in tourism decisions, which are affected by different problem-solving strategies depending on personal traits or characteristics and social contexts, and the choice is based on economic or cognitive biases (Decrop, 2006). Crompton (1992) suggests that different destinations are ordered hierarchically, and only a few are in the final decision. The assignment in the choice sets on internal factors such as the tourist's socio-psychological characteristics, travel limitations, and external factors related to the different characteristics of the destination (Ankomah et al., 1996).

The relevant destinations are formed once the decision to make a trip has started (Um & Crompton, 1990). During the initial phase, they are grouped into known destinations (Howard & Sheth, 1969). The whole set can be divided into three subcategories:

- a set of destinations that a tourist does not know (Spiggle & Sewall, 1987),
- a set of destinations that a tourist knows and can visit (Woodside & Sherrell, 1977),
- a set of all known destinations unavailable for various reasons (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

Narayana and Markin (1975) suggest that the available set is further divided into a relevant set, a set of destinations considered unacceptable, and a set of destinations not evaluated positively or negatively. Destinations that are evaluated negatively by a tourist are also called excluded sets (Decrop, 2006). The final stage of the process is selecting a destination from the relevant set (Crompton, 1992). Decrop (2010) asserts that at the end of the process, a destination is not chosen from the relevant set but from an available set that includes feasible destinations after considering the tourist's limitations.

Whether or not a destination can go through the entire process, from awareness to final choice, depends on internal and external factors (Crompton, 1992). These factors, inhibitors or facilitators, are essential in reducing alternative destinations (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992). Studies on travel inhibitors or restrictions often investigate tourism characteristics by focusing on a specific market segment (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000) or a specific destination (Botha et al., 1999; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). Numerous research studies have explored the connection between travelers' personality traits and their chosen travel destinations (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Plog, 1974). Similarly, a significant body of research has focused on how travel motivation can impact the selection of travel destinations by people with different purposes (Dann, 1981; Kozak, 2002; Moscardo et al., 1996). Additionally, previous research has delved into the decision-making process travelers use to narrow down a set of potential travel destinations to make a final choice (Ajzen & Driver, 1992; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lyonski, 1989).

A more recent study (Tassiello & Tillotson, 2020) studied the early stage of the decision-making process, where tourists move from skimming for information to evaluating alternatives. This process is an essential issue in tourism because it directly affects tourist behavior (Fridgen, 1984). Therefore, Tassiello and Tillotson (2020) investigated the intention of the tourist in the early stages of the decision-making process and the information relevant to making a decision, explaining how the tourist deals with subjective knowledge. Subjective knowledge is the individual perception of how much an individual knows (Sharifpour et al., 2014). It arises from objective knowledge, the information in a personal memory that might initiate a tourist's intention to travel (Raju et al., 1995). "Subjective knowledge psychologically activates a higher degree of self-congruity with a destination, impregnating the destination with a sense of familiarity that curbs the intention to travel" (Tassiello & Tillotson, 2020, p. 1).

Furthermore, subjective knowledge is independent of objective knowledge and directly influences decision-making and psychological procedures (Hadar & Sood, 2014). The different volumes of subjective knowledge can impact the tourist's decision-making process regarding the destination (Sharifpour et al., 2014). Park and Jang (2013) reported that having more subjective knowledge is better because it increases an individual's sense of personal control when uncertainty appears. In tourism environments, uncertainty is pervasive, especially when results are unknown or difficult to predict (Wong & Yeh, 2009). Therefore, tourists may think that having more information can help them when making a destination election. There is research on how tourists gather knowledge about a destination before they travel because of the lack of experience or knowledge (Gursoy & McLeary, 2004), which has probably led to the conclusion that more information leads to better choices.

Nevertheless, research must acknowledge that tourists crave unique experiences and that more knowledge about a destination may lead them to decline the destination (Park & Jang, 2013). According to Norton et al. (2007), more knowledge directly affects decision-making. Uncertainty tends to be solved with more knowledge, resulting in dissimilarities between viewpoints and a decreased preference for that choice (Norton et al., 2007). Tourists' travel intentions are complicated when planning and deciding to take a leisure vacation because they are associated with more uncertainty (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). People seek information, and excess information creates an oversaturation that causes them to lose the ability to form judgments (Jacoby, 1984). Less subjective knowledge leads to less perceived self-congruity but a higher possibility of liking a choice (Miller et al., 1998). Tourists look for something new in the destination, and thus having less subjective knowledge may increase visit intention (Jang & Feng, 2007). A tourist is more likely to be satisfied with a destination choice when there is limited knowledge during the decision process's initial phases.

The decision-making process can be viewed as irrational and can influence actions and behaviors. Destination choice usually happens in a different context than the actual consumption, and a trip is organized on gradual and interconnected decisions that together determine the experience. Therefore, the psychological process that emerges in the early stages of the decision-making process can define the travel intention.

The exploration of Tassiello and Tillotson (2020) makes two significant contributions to the destination choice procedures of tourists. On the one hand, it examined a little-studied phase of the tourist decision-making process: the psychological organization of information in a tourist's early decision-making process that causes the perception of a good potential destination. In addition, it shows that tourists mistakenly believe that more information conducts to positive destination choices. On the other hand, it shows how destination managers can give better advice to visitors by gradually sharing information about a destination.

The result of the study (2020) was the finding that the subjective knowledge of the tourist about a destination and the intention to travel is negatively related because it magnifies familiarity and accentuates the sense that the destination lacks novelty. When deciding on a leisure trip, several decisions must be made, such as the dates, duration, and destination.

Travel companies might think that offering detailed information might persuade the tourist. However, the reality is that all these decisions together can result in information saturation, which activates subjective knowledge and leads to distancing from the potential choice (Tassiello & Tillotson, 2020). Therefore, if marketers or destination managers evaluate the information, they can avoid oversaturating the tourist and ensure an efficient consultation.

Overall, understanding the decision-making process of tourists is crucial for destination managers and marketers in developing effective marketing strategies and improving the overall tourist experience. By recognizing the factors influencing travelers' destination choices, destination managers can better tailor their marketing efforts to appeal to specific traveler segments and address potential inhibitors. In addition, a deeper understanding of the decision-making process can help tourism organizations improve their product offerings and create more appealing travel packages. As the travel industry continues to grow and evolve, ongoing research into the decision-making process of tourists will remain essential for developing effective strategies and enhancing the overall travel experience.

2.2.5 Factors that affect the Tourism Decision Process

The destination choice process consists of three stages: the formation of an available awareness set, the reduction to the relevant set, and the selection of the final destination (Crompton, 1992). Initially, tourists reject unavailable destinations due to objective constraints and determining the availability of destinations that tourists know. This process is usually passive and sometimes unconscious, and its evaluation may only cover some of the destinations that tourists know (Um & Crompton, 1990). In the second stage, the awareness set is narrowed to the relevant set by acquiring further information on potential destinations. Finally, in the selection stage, tourists select the final destination from the updated information set. Although the formation of an available awareness set is sometimes excluded from the decision-making process, brand awareness is necessary (Laroche et al., 2003).

Various factors impact tourist decision-making processes in selecting a holiday destination. In addition to objective knowledge and statistics, tourists rely on emotional, affective, and tacit knowledge (Williams & Baláž, 2014). Prentice (2006) highlights the role of affect in tourists' decision-making processes and proposes an integrated choice set model that considers the concept of affect as information.

Familiarity with a destination and culture are crucial factors influencing tourists' decision-making processes (Williams & Baláž, 2014). Money and Crotts (2003) suggest that cultural distance should be considered in addition to geographic distance in studying information search or travel purchasing behavior. Sousa and Bradley (2006) further emphasize the significance of cultural distance and the potential for significant cultural differences or habits between the tourist's country of origin and the host country to cause uncertainty about appropriate behavior. This sense of uncertainty can increase the sense of unfamiliarity towards a destination, as noted by Lepp and Gibson (2008). Thus, familiarity and cultural distance are critical factors impacting tourists' decision-making when selecting a holiday destination. In addition to familiarity and cultural distance, Wu et al. (2011) identified three factors that impact tourists' decision-making in choosing a travel destination.

The first two categories are alternative-specific factors, which refer to the permanent attributes of a destination, and situational factors, which relate to temporary factors, such as the trip's timing. The third category is decision-maker-specific factors, linked to the characteristics of the individual tourist (Wu et al., 2011).

Price is a destination attribute widely discussed in the alternative-specific group and has been studied in the context of tourism activities and travel costs. Studies by Awaritefe (2004) and Eymann and Ronning (1997) have investigated the effect of price on tourism activities, while research by Morey et al. (1991), Seddighi et al. (2001), and Train (1998) have explored the impact of the travel cost on travel decisions. According to the law of demand in economic theory, an increase in price leads to a decrease in visit intention, if all other factors remain constant. In addition to price, travel distance and travel time also harm visit intention, consistent with their similarity to price as crucial factors affecting travel decisions (Huybers, 2003; Wu et al., 2011).

When selecting a holiday destination, the availability and type of tourist resources or attractions are significant factors that influence tourists' decision-making processes (Moscardo et al., 1996). Studies have shown that the number of tourist attractions or spots available at a destination positively correlates with visit intention (Wu et al., 2011). Moreover, the type of activities available at a destination has been found to affect visit intention positively (Huybers, 2003). The attractiveness and reputation of a destination have also been identified as factors that positively impact visit intention (Awaritefe, 2004; Wu et al., 2011). Ranking activities at a destination is also essential in determining visit intention (Train, 1998). In addition to the availability of tourist resources, providing high-quality services at a destination is also critical in trip planning (Awaritefe, 2004; Siderelis & Moore, 1998). Destinations that provide quality services to visitors can improve their satisfaction and increase their likelihood of returning. It is, therefore, essential for destinations to invest in improving the quality of their services to enhance visitors' overall experience.

Situational factors related to a specific such as crowdedness (Font, 2000; Huybers, 2003), climate and weather conditions (Hamilton, 2004), and social and political situations (Seddighi et al., 2001), can also affect travel destination choice. Although these factors are temporary, they can significantly affect travel destination choice. Research suggests that crowdedness negatively affects visit intention (Font, 2000; Huybers, 2003), and climate and weather conditions are essential considerations in the destination choice process (Hamilton, 2004).

Similarly, social and political situations can impact travel decisions (Seddighi et al., 2001). In addition to situational factors, characteristics of the travel party can also influence destination choice. Research has shown that the size and composition of a travel group can impact the choice of travel destination (Nichols & Snepenger, 1988; Ritchie & Filiatrault, 1980).

Subjective factors, including personality, also significantly influence the travel destination choice. Personality has been identified as an essential factor that affects an individual's preference for travel destinations (McCrae & Costa, 1994). For example, highly open individuals are likelier to seek out unique and unconventional travel experiences (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Similarly, individuals with high levels of extraversion tend to seek destinations with social stimulation and interaction (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Research has also shown that the travel preferences of individuals with different personalities vary significantly (Mehrabian & Russell, 1973; McCrae & Costa, 1994). Thus, personality is an essential factor that affects travel destination choices. Travel motivation is a subjective factor that influences destination choice. Travel motivation is typically trip-specific, unlike personality, which is relatively stable within a period of life (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Travel motivation is divided into two forces: push and pull factors. Push factors are related to internal or emotional aspects, whereas pull factors are more related to external or cognitive aspects (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The push factor refers to tourist motivations that drive tourists away from home. In contrast, the pull factor represents the specific attractions of the destination that induce the traveler to go there (Dann, 1981). The former is motivated by the desire to experience different or better amenities, while the latter is motivated by leaving a familiar environment to see different things (Crompton, 1979).

2.2.6 Leisure Travel Decision

Czepkiewicz et al. (2020) surveyed residents of Reykjavík, gathering information about their domestic and international travel patterns. The authors considered five potential factors impacting travel decisions to determine residents that travel more and the reasons behind their decisions. The five groups are:

1-Socio-economic and demographic characteristics:

The study found that socioeconomic and demographic factors significantly influence travel patterns. Lower-income residents and families with children travel less, while higher education is associated with fewer domestic trips. However, the impact of these factors is less pronounced than the influence of language proficiency, which significantly affects international travel. Knowing more languages is strongly correlated with an increase in the number of annual international trips taken. Each additional language known positively affects the frequency of international travel.

The study suggests that this may be because speaking a foreign language reduces the cognitive effort required to travel, as supported by previous research (Kaufmann, 2002). The authors state, "The more languages are spoken, the more frequently a person appears to travel internationally" (Czepkiewicz et al., 2020, p.72).

2-Monetary rebound effects:

The study found little evidence to support the existence of economic rebound effects. Interviews suggested that trade-offs between daily living expenses and leisure trips still result in economic rebound effects for certain income levels, where savings from daily consumption can facilitate leisure travel. However, car ownership was associated with increased domestic travel, and residents reported that their income limited their ability to travel (Czepkiewicz et al., 2020).

3-Compensation or escape hypothesis:

Substantial evidence supports the compensation or escapes hypothesis, where owning a vacation home increases domestic travel. Residents living near the main center tend to travel more internationally, consistent with other studies by Holden and Linnerud (2011). This finding is consistent with previous studies by Strandell and Hall (2015) and Holden and Linnerud (2011).

4-Lifestyles and other socio-psychological characteristics:

As supported by other authors, firm evidence exists that a household's lifestyle influences their destination choice, particularly for young adults with cosmopolitan attitudes who tend to travel more internationally (Holden & Norland, 2005).

5-Dispersion of social networks:

There was clear qualitative evidence that the dispersion of social networks significantly impacts travel. With the ability to easily connect with people in different destinations, social contacts have become an essential motivation for travel. Consequently, the travel industry has grown as more people visit friends and family or attend events with social connections (Czepkiewicz et al., 2020).

The most significant predictors of international travel were cosmopolitan attitudes and language skills, while owning a summer home was a significant predictor of domestic travel. The five categories are interconnected, as motivation to travel can arise from various factors such as an open mind, a desire for diversity, and making new contacts (Czepkiewicz et al., 2020). However, the sample size was small and may not represent the general population. Additionally, the study was conducted in Iceland, far from other countries, making international trips long and usually requiring flying, possibly biasing the data. Finally, the study did not account for the impact of foreign language knowledge on travel decisions.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology approach employed to investigate the research question of how foreign language knowledge impacts leisure travel decision-making. It comprises the research paradigm, research method, and limitations. Furthermore, it outlines the study's process, including acquiring knowledge, data analysis, and the rationale behind their selection. The chapter also establishes the guidelines that underpin the thesis, providing a clear framework for the research.

The **first section** starts by outlining the research paradigm that guides the choice of research methodology and introduces the reader to the implications of conducting research in this field. Additionally, this section establishes the context and justifies the chosen approach for investigating the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decisions.

The **second section** provides an overview of data collection and analysis tools overview. It describes the specific methods and procedures to gather the necessary data to achieve the research aim. The section also discusses the rationale behind selecting these methods and their appropriateness for capturing the desired insights.

The **concluding** section briefly describes the research's setting, highlighting the relevance of studying the impact of foreign language knowledge on destination selection. It emphasizes the significance of this research within the broader context of the leisure travel industry, establishing the importance of understanding the role of language proficiency in travel decision-making. In this section, the potential limitations of the study are acknowledged. It explores how the researcher's background or personal biases may have influenced the choice of methods or the interpretation of data. Then limitations are put forward, including how the researcher's background may have influenced those methods.

By following this methodology, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions, contributing to the existing knowledge base and informing stakeholders in the tourism industry.

3.1 Research Paradigm

According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), the research paradigm reflects the researcher's understanding of reality, beliefs, and thoughts. It influences the decisions made throughout the research process, including selecting methods and interpreting collected data.

The methodology employed aligns with the Interpretive Paradigm, which recognizes the subjective nature of reality and emphasizes the understanding of human experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This paradigm is the guiding framework for exploring the subjective realities that shape this construct.

Upon selecting this paradigm, it became evident that a comprehensive understanding of research “the subjective world of human experiences” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.33) could not be achieved without considering the evolving nature of travel in recent decades. Consequently, acknowledging the impact of globalization and the changing dynamics of travel is crucial for generating meaningful and representative data in this research endeavor.

Within this paradigm, the phenomenological approach offers a valuable methodological lens for exploring and describing individuals’ lived experiences during decision-making processes (Smith et al., 2009). By adopting a phenomenological approach, this study acknowledges the subjectivity and contextual nature of individuals’ perceptions, interpretations, and meanings related to foreign language knowledge and leisure travel. It aims to uncover the essence and structures of these experiences, allowing for a deeper understanding of how foreign language knowledge influences individuals' leisure travel decisions. Participants can express their viewpoints through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questioning, revealing rich insights. Moreover, this approach acknowledges the active role of the researcher as an interpreter, engaging in an intuitive process to uncover the underlying themes and structures that emerge from the participants' narratives. This aligns with the interpretive paradigm's emphasis on the researcher's active engagement and the co-construction of knowledge with participants (Smith et al., 2009).

The interpretive paradigm is well-aligned, considering the nature of the research question and the objective to explore subjective experiences and meaning associated with foreign language knowledge and travel decisions. The phenomenological approach within the interpretive paradigm is highly appropriate for this research, as it provides a robust framework to explore and interpret the subjective experiences and meanings associated with foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. It allows for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation, shedding light on the complex interplay between language competence and individuals' decision-making processes in leisure travel.

The paradigm framework comprises four fundamental elements: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This methodological chapter focuses on three aspects and touches upon ethical considerations, forming part of the broader axiological theory.

Ontology, as a branch of philosophy, pertains to one's assumptions about reality. In the research context, ontology involves understanding the phenomenon's essence under examination (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher adopts a relativist ontology, which posits that reality is subjective and varies from person to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In exploring globalization at tourism destinations and the significance of language learning, the researcher recognizes the importance of delving into personal realities, as each person experiences this era and selects destinations in their unique way, thus constructing their reality. The aim is to interpret these realities without generalizing and acknowledges the impossibility of discovering absolute truth. Additionally, the researcher recognizes that her values and background can influence the research topic, research approach, and interpretation of data, including academic knowledge and personal life experiences (Scotland, 2012).

Epistemology refers to what is regarded as acceptable knowledge (Bryman, 2012, p.27). It elucidates the researcher's perception and conceptualization of knowledge and is crucial in guiding their approach to acquiring and uncovering knowledge within the specific context under investigation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In the interpretive paradigm, epistemology is characterized by subjectivism (Scotland, 2012), wherein the world and knowledge are interconnected and are constructed through individuals' interactions with and participation in the world. The researcher recognizes that knowledge is co-created through interactions and seeks to explore and understand the subjective perspectives of participants in the research process. In this regard, the researcher emphasizes engaging with research participants to uncover, comprehend, and interpret the impact of language knowledge on leisure travel decision-making.

3.1.1 Trustworthiness of the Research

Guba (1981) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argued that qualitative research, mainly within the interpretive paradigm, should be assessed for trustworthiness rather than relying on traditional notions of internal/external validity and reliability. Guba (1981) proposes four criteria for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria align with the requirements commonly applied by naturalist/positivist researchers (Shenton, 2004; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The credibility criterion is imperative for ensuring that the finding of the research to be concurring with reality. It can be approached through various arrangements, such as triangulation, ensuring honesty in informants, and iterative questioning. According to Lincoln et al. (1985), ensuring honesty in informants is crucial in qualitative research. The authors highlight the importance of establishing trust and rapport with informants, creating a safe and comfortable environment for openly sharing experiences and perspectives.

In this study, this method of ensuring honesty in informants has been used, as recommended by Lincoln et al. (1985). Building a genuine and non-threatening relationship with the informants facilitates accurate and authentic insights. This approach involves active listening, respect for participants' viewpoints, and the creation of a trustworthy research environment.

Furthermore, the author adhered to ethical considerations by being transparent about the study's purpose, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and maintaining the highest standards of integrity. These practices align with the guidelines outlined by Lincoln et al. (1985) to foster trust and maintain the credibility of the research. Ensuring honesty in informants will enhance this qualitative study's overall quality and validity, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon under investigation.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight that iterative questioning involves a flexible and dynamic approach to search, where initial questions serve as a starting point but are subject to modification and refinement throughout the research process. This iterative approach allows researchers to delve deeper into the participants' experiences, explore emerging themes, and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Iterative questioning involves actively listening to participants' responses, probing for further details or clarification, and adapting subsequent questions based on emerging insights. The aim is to generate rich and in-depth data by engaging in a continuous dialogue with participants and allowing the research question to evolve. Furthermore, the authors suggest that iterative questioning promotes reflexivity in the research process. This reflexivity contributes to the overall rigor and validity of qualitative research. Researchers are encouraged to reflect on their assumptions and biases, consider alternative perspectives, and adjust their questioning strategies accordingly. By combining these approaches, the credibility of the qualitative research can be enhanced by employing rigorous sampling techniques, establishing trust with participants, and refining the questioning approach to capture a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.1.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research and any philosophical paradigm encompassing considerations that ensure the protection and well-being of participants (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Ethical considerations in research build trust with participants, leading to more reliable data collection. This includes obtaining consent for interviews and using recorded conversations for research purposes.

Respecting participants' autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality is paramount throughout the research process, and researchers must minimize any potential discomfort to participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality of their information.

Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities in the research findings and any published work. The participants' sensitive or personal information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.1.3 Exploratory Qualitative Approach

In research methodology, it is essential to go beyond merely discussing research methods and delve into the underlying rationale for their selection within the study's specific context, including why a particular method or technique was chosen (Kothari, 2004). Hence, in this study, careful consideration has been given to the logic behind the chosen methodology to ensure that it aligns with the research objectives and allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the research findings.

Research studies can be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (Yin, 2009); however, the research methods employed in this study involve exclusively qualitative data collection techniques to explore the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decision-making. Qualitative research is distinct from quantitative analysis as it produces findings not derived from statistical procedures or quantification. Instead, the qualitative study aims to explore and understand phenomena in depth, using interviews, observations, and textual analysis (Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of words rather than numerical analysis typically associated with quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe qualitative research to comprehend how individuals interpret their experiences, construct their realities, and attribute meaning to their expertise. As Leavy (2017) described, qualitative research focuses on understanding and exploring people's lives, experiences, and values within their contexts. These methods prioritize face-to-face interactions and procedures, offering a unique opportunity to study contemporary social phenomena (Roy & Uekusa, 2020). The nature of the research question aims to understand how foreign language knowledge influences individuals' destination choices, observe their actions, and uncover their meaning.

This study used open-ended questioning to capture rich and detailed accounts of participants' experiences, perceptions, and motivations related to foreign language knowledge and leisure travel. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility while ensuring key research questions were addressed.

Through a systematic analysis of the interview data, including coding and thematic analysis, the study seeks to uncover patterns, themes, and insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences and meanings associated with language competence and leisure travel decisions.

3.2 Research Method

This chapter details the tools and instruments in this study, encompassing the practical aspects of data collection and the subsequent analysis and interpretation process. The primary research method used in this study was semi-structured qualitative interviews.

3.2.1 Data Collection

This research employed qualitative methods and an exploratory study. The study's primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews, which capture participants' perspectives, experiences, and the underlying meaning behind their leisure travel decision-making processes. While research often employs multiple data collection methods (Yin, 2009), semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection method. This choice is motivated by capturing participants' perspectives, experiences, and the meaning behind their leisure travel decision-making processes. Therefore, the data collection involves selected participants who possess relevant language skills and have engaged in leisure travel. Advantages provided when conducting personal interviews with the sample include collecting in-depth knowledge, understanding historical perspectives, and flexibly adapting every interview to the respondent. During the semi-structured interview, additional probing questions were used to explore the participants' responses in depth. Based on their initial answers, these questions aimed to uncover further insights, clarify ambiguities, and develop a comprehensive understanding of their leisure travel decision-making processes. Through probing questions, valuable information and nuanced experiences were not overlooked, allowing for a thorough exploration of the participants' perspectives.

According to Yin (2009), applying a case study design in research is deemed relevant based on specific criteria. These criteria include:

1. focusing on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context,
2. having little to no control over the events being studied, and
3. seeking to analyze contemporary issues or phenomena using research questions that explore the "how" and "why."

As a result, qualitative research often employs smaller, more focused samples rather than large random samples (Hossain, 2011). Guest et al. (2006) conducted a study to explore the relationship between sample size, data saturation, and variability of responses in qualitative research.

A quantitative analysis of interview data from various research projects found that data saturation can often be achieved with around 12 interviews, where additional interviews provide limited new insights Yin (2009). The interview process consisted of a sample size of 12 face-to-face interviews which aligns with the criteria for qualitative research design suggested by Yin (2009). To maintain anonymity, each of the 12 participants in the study was assigned a pseudonym starting from A, representing “anonymous,” followed by a numerical identifier A1 to A 12.

However, it is important to note that one of the interviews, specifically the interview with A12, was conducted over Google Meets due to the geographical distance of the interviewee. This interview was necessary because of the different perspectives he could give because of his age range and zero knowledge of foreign languages.

The first interview served as a pre-test interview, and afterward, the questions were improved and highlighted topics that were not included in the first interview guide. The final interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. The guide was initially prepared in English and then adapted into a common language, including Spanish, Dutch, and Italian, to facilitate communication with individuals residing in different locations. Each interview lasted approximately 10-25 minutes and was conducted with the participant's consent and willingness to share and record the interview. Before the interviews, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the recording and transcription of the interview, the material's intended use, and anonymity. The interviews were recorded using "iPhone Voice Memos" and subsequently transcribed manually to ensure accurate documentation of the data collected. A total of 3 hours and 4 minutes of recordings were produced. The interviews were conducted between 30/04/2023 and 06/06/2023 and were held face-to-face in different preselected places where it was quiet enough not to get distracted during the interviews.

The study area selection was based on logical considerations rather than random selection. Specifically, the locations of Villingen-Schwenningen, Stuttgart, Alicante, Valencia, and Tenerife were chosen to explore the topic from different perspectives.

The sampling strategy employed a purposive sampling technique Etikan et al. (2016). Participants were selected based on specific criteria to ensure a diverse representation of individuals with varying foreign language knowledge and travel experiences. Efforts were made to include participants from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and travel preferences to capture a broad range of perspectives. However, there was a restriction based on age, meaning that the researcher had to choose respondents above 18 who could provide information about the study because they had the autonomy and experience to provide relevant information about their travel choices and destinations.

The interviews were conducted using an interview guide with a limited number of pre-decided questions, serving as guidelines to ensure consistency across interviews. However, the design also allows for significant flexibility, enabling the interviewer to engage in additional questions and discussions based on participants' unique experiences and insights.

This approach follows an inductive style, which allows for adaptation to emerging questions during the interviews. It also allows informants to suggest additional interviewees relevant to the study, further enriching the research process (Thomas, 2006). The interview consisted of three sections. The first section of the questionnaire focused on gathering socio-demographic information from the respondents about gender, age, level of education, and country of residence. These questions provide essential background information and enable the analysis of potential perspective variations based on socio-demographic factors. Considering these socio-demographic variables, the study examines how language proficiency and destination selection may vary across different demographic groups. Following these questions, the questionnaire also included questions about language knowledge, explicitly focusing on the participants' mother tongue, foreign language proficiency, and English level. Including the English level as a variable of interest is motivated by recognizing English as a global language (Crystal, 2003). In the third section, the questionnaire explored the respondents' perspectives on destination election, factors influencing their choices, previous experiences related to foreign language knowledge, and the impact of language knowledge on their travel decisions. These open-ended questions were developed based on a comprehensive review of the existing literature, ensuring that all essential factors and aspects of interest were addressed.

Additionally, a crucial part of this section involved presenting four proposals comparing two destinations, where the interviewees were asked to choose between the provided options. The selection of destinations in the questionnaire was guided by several considerations to facilitate the examination of various factors influencing participants' destination preferences. Firstly, Germany and Italy were chosen as options due to their status as popular tourist destinations in Europe in 2021 (UNWTO, n.d). The aim was to investigate the decision-making process when faced with relatively equal levels of familiarity regarding the destinations. However, it was also recognized that participants' choices might be influenced by the Mediterranean nature of Italy compared to Germany, located in northern Europe. The inclusion of Portugal and Montenegro as the second set of options stemmed from the intention to explore participants' openness to considering less familiar destinations. Among Europe's ten most visited countries, Portugal contrasted with Montenegro, which ranked lower in visitation in 2021 (UNWTO, n.d.). The objective was to examine whether participants would opt for an unfamiliar destination like Montenegro, where language knowledge may be less known due to its relative obscurity. Similarly, the choice between Greece and Italy aimed to shed light on the decision-making process when selecting between two Mediterranean countries.

Given their popularity as tourist destinations in Europe in 2021 (UNWTO, n.d.), the focus was not solely on the Mediterranean aspect but on understanding participants' considerations regarding language preferences within the context of these two countries. Lastly, including Spain and San Marino allowed for comparing a well-known destination and a lesser known one. While Spain ranks among the most visited countries in Europe, San Marino is often overlooked and falls toward the lower end of the list in terms of visitation (UNWTO, n.d.). This selection explored whether participants would choose Spain, which offers familiarity with its widely spoken language, or San Marino, a destination often characterized by limited location and language spoken recognition. By incorporating a range of destinations with varying popularity, geographical locations, and language characteristics, the questionnaire design sought to capture the complexity of participants' decision-making processes. This approach aims to mitigate potential biases arising from a preference for Mediterranean destinations or well-known locations, thus facilitating a more comprehensive analysis of the role of language knowledge in leisure travel decision-making.

Table 1 Interview subjects, date, and duration of the interviews

Interviewee	Date	Duration
A1	30/04	17:58
A2	30/04	10:40
A3	12/05	24:00
A4	15/05	10:55
A5	17/05	10:43
A6	24/05	13:23
A7	25/05	18:35
A8	26/05	9:58
A9	27/05	15:21
A10	04/06	12:41
A11	04/06	19:41
A12	06/06	20:04
TOTAL		3h 4 min

Source: own output

Overall, the chosen research methods, data collection techniques, data analysis approach, and research strategy are aligned with the research questions and aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how foreign knowledge influences leisure travel decision-making. They enable exploring subjective experiences and perspectives, allowing rich and nuanced insights to emerge from the data.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed through thematic analysis. This approach involves identifying patterns, themes, and insights within the qualitative data Braun and Clarke (2006), allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the participants' perspectives, experiences, and the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decision-making processes. This method identifies and analyzes themes from the collected data (Clarke et al., 2015). This method comprises six steps Braun and Clarke (2006) outlined next and their application in this study.

The initial step involves familiarizing oneself with the data through repeated reading and active engagement, facilitating the identification of potential patterns and meanings within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study's data preparation involved manually transcribing 12 voice message transcripts. Each message was carefully listened to and transcribed word-for-word, excluding fillers, to improve readability. This meticulous transcription process aimed to ensure data accuracy and reliability. Since the interviews were conducted in various languages, they were all translated into English. The transcripts served as valuable resources for subsequent analysis and interpretation in the thematic analysis process. Appendix 2 offers the extract of the transcribed semi-structured interviews.

The second step entails generating initial codes from the data, which highlight interesting features or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research manually analyzed the transcripts without any software or automated tools; this hands-on analysis ensured a meticulous examination of the data, allowing for comprehensive content exploration. Through this process, 14 initial codes emerged, representing similarities and differences identified during the data familiarization phase.

The codes are sorted into potential themes **in the third step**, and all relevant data extracts are collated accordingly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, repetitive and significant codes were extracted from the data, resulting in a final selection of 11 codes. These codes were then clustered together, leading to the formation of 5 themes. **The fourth step** involves reviewing and refining the themes, ensuring their coherence and distinctiveness (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some codes were modified and reorganized during this process to better align with the emerging theme.

In the fifth step, the themes are defined, refined, and named, involving a detailed analysis of the data extracts within each theme to elucidate their significance and contribution to the overall narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the following themes were selected and named:

1. Communication
2. Travel decision
3. Globalization and evolution.

Finally, in the **sixth step**, the analysis is finalized and reported, typically through a comprehensive write-up that presents the findings, supporting evidence, and interpretations of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This comprehensive write-up will present the results and discussion, supported by evidence, and offer interpretations of the identified themes.

3.3 Limitations

This section aims to delineate the limitations inherent in the methodology employed for this master thesis. Firstly, it is essential to acknowledge the potential influence of the researcher's background on the outcomes. Secondly, the limitations of the interviews and, finally, the limitations of the data analysis will be discussed.

The researcher's upbringing and exposure to an international environment have fostered a more open-minded perspective, particularly in recognizing the impact of languages in daily life. Consequently, the researcher's conviction regarding the influence of languages on leisure decision-making may have shaped the discourse during the interviews. Moreover, with a study background in business administration, the researcher's inclination toward economic thinking may have influenced the inclusion of the question, *"Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate efficiently?"*

Additionally, the researcher's Master's study background in tourism has provided a different lens through which to perceive the world and understand the motivations and reasons behind travel, potentially differing from participants with diverse study backgrounds. These variations in the background could have contributed to differing perspectives and interpretations of the interview discourse.

Regarding the interviews, the majority (11 out of 12) were conducted face-to-face, allowing for the observation of the participant's expressions and the interpretation of nonverbal language, which facilitated accurate transcription. However, one interview (specifically A12) was conducted via Google Meet, introducing several limitations associated with digital and non-personal interview methods. Firstly, these methods can negatively impact the interview quality as small parts of the voice recording were inaudible.

Additionally, the absence of face-to-face interaction makes it difficult to interpret and utilize nonverbal cues typically present in traditional interviews. Davies et al. (2020) noted that online data gathering might enhance the likelihood of obtaining the desired sample; however, they observed that responses collected through online methods tend to be shorter and provide less contextual information. It is worth mentioning that in the case of my research, the responses obtained from the digital interview were not shorter; in fact, it was one of the most extended interviews conducted.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that the thematic analysis was conducted solely by one researcher, which may introduce biases in the interpretation of the data. As thematic analysis is a flexible approach, different researchers may interpret the dataset differently. To enhance the objectivity and reliability of the findings, involving multiple researchers or employing alternative perspectives in the data analysis process would provide a more comprehensive understanding and minimize individual biases.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the thematic analysis results to address the research question regarding the impact of foreign language knowledge on leisure travel decisions. The literature review noted that while the influence of foreign language knowledge on decision-making has been acknowledged, little exploration has been done on its specific impact on leisure travel choices. Additionally, the research gap was identified regarding whether certain languages have a greater impact than others or the stage of the decision-making process where language plays a role.

During the data collection process, it became evident that most interviewees did not perceive language as a barrier to traveling to a destination, even if they had limited foreign language skills. Interestingly, when choosing between two destinations, most participants opted for places with languages similar to their native language, reducing the communication effort required. Subsequently, when asked if they believed their language familiarity influenced their choice, most participants recognized a connection, albeit only when prompted. Some participants who did not realize the connection admitted that there might be an unconscious influence. Surprisingly, 9 out of the 12 participants preferred destinations where they could easily communicate. However, during the interviews, it became evident that other factors outweighed language in their decision-making process.

The study included a diverse range of participants: four men and eight women of six different nationalities and ages. This diversity in the sample allowed for an examination of how cultural perspectives and language backgrounds influenced leisure travel decision-making processes. By including participants from various nationalities, the study aimed to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives, enhancing the depth and richness of the collected data.

To further analyze the data, the characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 2. This presentation highlights the age, the native language, foreign languages spoken, place of residence, country of origin, and preferred destinations.

Through this analysis, it will be possible to explore if individuals with fewer language skills tend to travel less, determine if the specific languages they speak have an impact on their decisions, and investigate whether nationality or country of residence also plays a role, as living in a different country may expose individuals to the language spoken in that region and potentially make them more open-minded.

Overall, the findings from this study provide insights into the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making, shedding light on the influence of language familiarity on destination preferences. By uncovering these dynamics, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how language interacts with other factors in shaping individuals' travel choices.

Table 2 Description of interview subjects

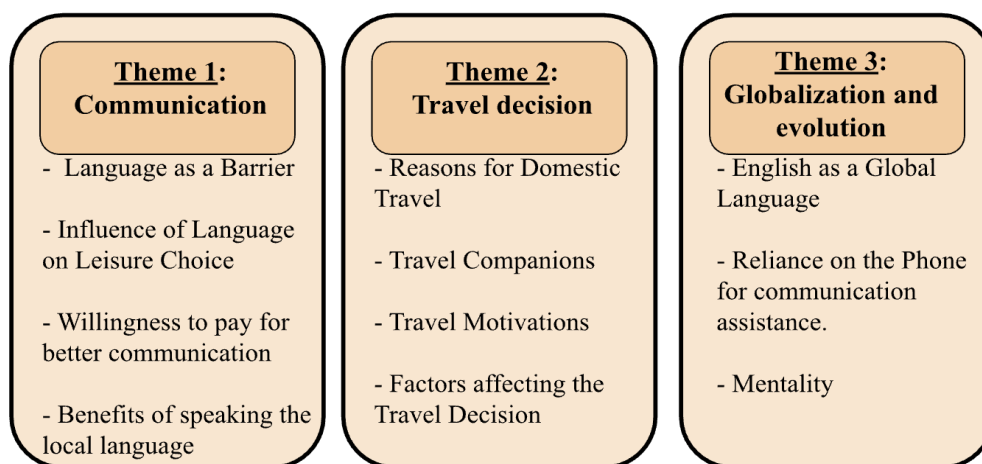
Interviewee	Age	Native language	Other languages	Place of residence	Country of origin	Preferred destination
A1	30	Valencian	Spanish English	Spain	Spain	Domestic
A2	32	Spanish	English	Spain	Spain	International
A3	26	German	English French Spanish	Germany	Germany	International
A4	77	Dutch	Spanish English German	Spain	The Netherlands	Domestic*
A5	27	Spanish	English	Spain	Spain	Domestic
A6	25	Arab	Valencian Spanish English	Spain	Morocco	Domestic

A7	31	Arab	Valencian Spanish English French	Spain	Morocco	International
A8	58	Spanish	German Dutch Italian French English	Spain	Spain	International
A9	27	English	Spanish	Spain	England	Domestic*
A10	27	Italian	English French Spanish German	Germany	Italy	International
A11	27	German	English	Germany	Germany	International
A12	49	Spanish	Valenciano	Spain	Spain	Equal

Source: own output

During the thematic analysis, three themes emerged, each accompanied by subthemes which will be explained in the next section. The themes and corresponding subthemes are the following:

Figure 1 Thematic analysis themes



Source: own input

4.1 Communication

Effective communication plays an essential role in human interaction, and in today's interconnected world, the acquisition of language skills has gained increasing importance (Crystal, 2003). According to Czepkiewicz et al. (2020), the ability to speak multiple languages positively influences international travel. However, language barriers present obstacles to effective communication (Evans, 1976), thereby influencing individuals' choices of leisure travel destinations. The data presented in Table 2 regarding participants' foreign language proficiency are consistent with Mejer et al. (2010) that Spain is among the European countries with relatively lower levels of foreign language knowledge. All Spanish participants (A1, A2, A5, A12) demonstrate the lowest proficiency in foreign languages, except for participant A8. Recognizing the importance of communication, participants are often willing to invest more for better linguistic exchanges, with many expressing the benefits of speaking the local language. These interconnected factors around communication are consolidated within theme 1.

4.1.1 Language Barrier

Previous research consistently demonstrates a strong preference among tourists for destinations where they can communicate in their native language (Nagai et al., 2020). This finding is echoed in the current study, where most participants preferred traveling to countries where they can easily communicate.

Interestingly, this preference remained evident even among participants with high language proficiency, suggesting that the ease of communication holds significant value for leisure travel decisions. The perception of similar languages also contributed to a sense of effortless communication.

For instance, A1 emphasized the transformative nature of a trip when effective communication is possible, stating: "If I could choose, of course, then the trip changes completely when you can communicate." Notably, A1, despite having limited language skills, acknowledged that language proficiency alone is not the sole determining factor in their travel decision: "I would not only base it on the language."

Similarly, A4 preferred to stay in their country of residence, Spain, stating: "Yes, then I prefer to stay here. Then I can manage." Although A4 is proficient in multiple languages, they still find navigating experiences within their home country easier.

However, it is important to note that language barriers are not the sole influential factors in leisure travel decisions. A2 stated, "It depends on the destination, but probably yes," indicating that their preference to stay in the country varies depending on the specific destination.

This suggests that other aspects may override the language barrier factor, depending on the unique characteristics of each destination.

A7 shared a similar sentiment, remarking, "Yes, and I could manage with the languages I know because there are many similar languages in Europe, and many people speak English. When I was out of Europe, I went to Arab-speaking countries, so it was also not a problem." A7's experiences traveling in Europe led them to perceive a minimal language barrier due to the prevalence of English and the existence of similar languages. Furthermore, their visit to Arabic-speaking countries posed no hindrance due to their knowledge of the native language.

When participants were presented with a choice between two countries, A3 selected Portugal and mentioned, "It works to communicate. I think Portuguese is a little bit similar." A3's ability to speak Spanish contributed to their perceived ease of communication in Portuguese, highlighting the impact of language similarity on travel decisions.

Moreover, participant A8 presented a unique perspective on addressing language barriers by remarking, "Humans have quite a lot of ways to communicate apart from talking." A8 demonstrates a willingness to explore destinations where communication may pose a challenge: "In fact, it is really attractive or exotic to go to a place where you have no idea what people are talking about." This perspective highlights A8's openness to non-verbal communication and the allure of immersive experiences that transcend language barriers.

The interaction between language skills and the preferences of locals was also noted by A3 and A8, who observed that in France, locals prefer speaking their language but are accommodating when visitors try to communicate in French.

A3 mentioned, "French people don't want to speak English, but if you speak a little French, then it's enough," while A8 added, "French people usually prefer that everybody is speaking in French. But because I speak a little bit of French [...] it was not a problem."

Another insightful contribution was provided by A10, who possesses knowledge of four foreign languages. A10 emphasized the importance of knowing an official language spoken universally, recognizing its importance: "It makes you realize that it is important to know maybe an official language spoken everywhere." Furthermore, A10 expressed discomfort when faced with potential communication difficulties, remarking, "I would not feel completely comfortable knowing that I would have problems communicating." A10 further highlighted the interdependence of language skills, noting that travel decisions are influenced not only by the language proficiency of the traveler but also by the language skills at the destination: "It depends not only on me but also on where I go."

A particularly memorable quote from A6 encapsulates the overarching importance of communication: "The fact of being able to communicate is a super key factor."

While language considerations play a significant role, it is important to acknowledge that additional factors may outweigh the language barrier in influencing leisure travel choices. The impact of language as a barrier on travel decisions is significant, as participants consistently prefer destinations where communication in their native language is possible. However, it is worth noting that travel choices are also influenced by language similarity, cultural adaptability, and the allure of immersive experiences.

The interviews yielded intriguing findings regarding participants A7, A8, and A3, who are among the individuals with greater foreign language knowledge, as shown in Table 2. Notably, these participants mentioned the possibility of communication using similar languages. These findings align with the assertion made by Evans (1976), which suggests that individuals with proficiency in multiple languages are more likely to understand each other.

4.1.2 Influence of Language on Leisure Choice

The influence of language on the decision-making process has been examined in previous studies by Fishman (1971) and Hymes (1997), who argue that the native language is associated with emotions as it is acquired from our families during childhood. This emotional connection is not present with foreign languages, thus highlighting a distinction in their impact on decision-making.

Keysar et al. (2012) also explored the influence of language and found that risk aversion is observed when options are presented in the native language. However, the effect is not replicated when options are presented in a foreign language. However, these studies did not specifically address the influence of language on travel decision-making, leaving a significant gap in the literature that this study aims to address.

Examining the influence of language on leisure travel decisions, participant A2 initially articulated that language did not play a role in the last travel destination choice, as the primary consideration was the destination itself: "No. Because I don't consider language, I think about the place." However, when asked for the preference to travel to a destination where proficiency in the language is possible, A2 responded affirmatively, stating, "Because then I can understand, it's more comfortable and easy for me." This disparity in responses implies that although A2 may not consciously consider language during the overall decision-making process, it nevertheless plays a role in the preference toward destinations that facilitate effective communication.

A similar pattern emerged with Participant A3. Presented with a choice between Portugal and Montenegro, A3 selected Portugal as the preferred destination. When asked if an unknown language in Montenegro influenced the decision, A3 responded affirmatively, indicating that the unfamiliar language impacted the decision-making process. "Yes, yes, I think yes. That played a role, yes."

Additionally, participant A6 provided valuable insight, noting that while language may not be the main reason for travel decisions, it strongly affects the choices. "It was not the main reason, but it strongly affects the fact that they can understand me and communicate." A6's response further emphasizes the influence of language on travel decision-making. A6 emphasized the importance of effective communication in the decision-making process.

In contrast, participant A10 recognized the direct influence of language on the decision-making process: "If I had difficulties communicating, I would choose a different destination." Furthermore, A10 also emphasized the significance of language by stating: "I think that it influences the choice. Maybe not directly, but unconsciously, yes. It is a matter of safety." These remarks underscore A10's recognition of language as a determining factor in travel decisions with the recognition that language's impact may not always be immediately apparent or consciously considered. The finding aligns with the assertion made by Pinhey and Iverson (1994), which suggests that communication in a familiar language can enhance perceptions of safety. Similarly, A4 said, "I'm sure of it. Maybe not directly, but it influences."

Participant A11 acknowledged that language does impact decision-making, although it might not be the primary determinant "It has an impact but not the highest of the of making the decision." Participant A7 shared that the main motivation for travel was to visit a relative, but also mentioned feeling calmer knowing that the destination is in Spain, and they can speak Spanish. This indicates that language plays an unconscious role in their travel decision, providing a sense of comfort. "No, because it was to visit my sister, but I feel calmer knowing it is in Spain and I can speak Spanish."

4.1.3 Willingness to pay for better Communication

Despite initially expressing the belief that language does not influence their travel choices when asked, "Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate?", 11 out of 12 participants responded affirmatively. This question aimed to gauge the importance of communication to them, considering their willingness to pay a higher cost.

The participants, A1, A2, and A11, who are among those with less foreign language knowledge, as shown in Table 2, provided immediate positive responses. A1 stated, "If I would pay more? Yes, I am eager to pay more." A2 confidently replied, "Yes, of course."

Similarly, A11 emphasized, "For me, communication is a big thing, so I would spend more money." These responses highlight the significance of communication for individuals with limited proficiency in foreign languages.

A5, A6, and A7 also expressed a positive inclination, albeit with certain conditions. A6 responded, "If I can afford it economically, yes." A7 shared: "Yes, if I could communicate and learn more about the country and culture." A5 mentioned, "Yes... well, it depends on how much, but yes because it will also be more comfortable for me."

Initially, A3 expressed reluctance to pay more, stating, "I don't think so because I am looking for money and don't want to pay so much." However, upon further reflection within the same response, a shift in opinion occurred. The willingness to pay more would only apply in the case of a completely unfamiliar country, explaining, "I wouldn't pay, but maybe if it's a country where you don't know anything about the language, maybe... Vietnam or something like this."

Interestingly, British participant A9 acknowledged during the interview, "Being English, I have rarely gone to a place... where I knew that I couldn't speak English with someone." However, when posed with the same question, the response revealed a different perspective, "If I think about... where I know they don't speak any English and it might be difficult for me to get around, I would probably pay more to have someone there with me who could speak to people and translate for me."

In contrast, A8, who happens to be the participant with more foreign language knowledge, as shown in Table 2, was the only participant who expressed a lack of willingness to pay more, stating, "Not at all. I am one of those persons that prefer to discover it myself."

The willingness to pay more demonstrates the importance of communication in enhancing the travel experience, especially for those with limited foreign language knowledge. However, individual perspectives and preferences vary. While most participants value the assistance of language support, A8 prioritizes independence and discovery over-relying on communication aids.

Supporting this notion, Alcázar et al. (2019) revealed that tourists with better knowledge of the local language experience increased friendliness from locals. This suggests that lacking local language knowledge can be perceived as a barrier to international travel (Basala & Klenosky, 2001). These findings highlight the influence of language on connecting with locals and underscore the significance of strong communication skills within the context of travel.

4.1.4 Benefits of speaking the Local Language

Tourism fosters interactions among people who speak different languages, underscoring language the fundamental significance of language in enabling effective communication (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). Consequently, when participants were asked about the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language, the responses overwhelmingly emphasized the numerous benefits of this ability.

Specifically, participants A1, A2, and A5 highlighted the enhanced understanding and communication that arises from speaking the local language. A1 acknowledged, "There are many advantages of speaking their language." At the same time, A2 expressed, "All of them. Well, all the advantages. To get understood, to know everything." Similarly, A5 remarked, "If you can communicate with someone in their native language, if you can speak it. then you get closer to the people." These responses collectively underscore the importance of effective communication and the ability to establish deeper connections through language proficiency.

Moreover, participants A3, A7, and A8 emphasized the benefits of knowing the local language for cultural immersion and exploration. These findings align with the assertion put forth by various authors, including Classen, 2007 and Smith-Miller et al., 2010, who highlight that speaking the destination's language enables visitors to acquire a deeper comprehension of the culture. A3 stated: "I think you can explore more about the culture, background, and how they live, and you can understand a little bit more. They are also more open if you can speak their language." A7 added: "You can learn more about their culture, find places where only locals go, and avoid misunderstandings." A8 elaborated, "That's also a way of getting integrated into knowing about their traditions, food, and habits. If you are so lucky to speak the language of the place you are visiting, you have got a big advantage." These statements highlight how speaking the local language facilitates a deeper understanding of the local culture. By communicating directly with locals, travelers can gain insights into traditions, discover hidden gems, and engage in authentic cultural experiences. Furthermore, it fosters a sense of integration and connection with the local community.

Participants A6 and A11 concur on the practical assistance and guidance that speaking the native language can provide.

A6 stated: "They can even advise you or tell you to avoid this or that. That is the interesting part of speaking with locals." Similarly, A11 highlighted: "Of course, it's better if you can directly ask something or when you have problems that you can solve them with the people around you." These quotes underscore the tangible benefits of speaking the local language. By seeking advice, asking questions, and solving problems directly with locals, travelers can navigate their surroundings more effectively and receive valuable insights and assistance.

Although the direct influence of knowing foreign languages remains uncertain, the recognized benefits of speaking the native language are undeniable. By speaking the local language, visitors can develop a more profound comprehension of the local culture (Classen, 2007; Smith-Miller et al., 2010).

4.2 Travel Decision

The decision-making process in the context of travel is complex and influenced by various factors. Moutinho (1987) emphasized the role of social influences, suggesting that tourism decisions are shaped by personal traits, social contexts, and economic cognitive biases (Decrop, 2006). These decisions involve internal factors, such as the tourist's socio-psychological characteristics, travel limitations, and external factors related to the destination's unique character.

During the decision-making process, tourists construct choice sets based on their subjective evaluations of destinations. Destinations perceived negatively by a tourist are often excluded from consideration (Decrop, 2006). Subjective knowledge, distinct from objective knowledge, is critical in decision-making and psychological processes (Hadar & Sood, 2014). The varying levels of subjective knowledge can impact the decision-making process and the likelihood of choosing a particular destination (Millet et al., 1998). Tourists rely on objective, emotional, affective, and tacit knowledge when selecting a holiday destination (Williams & Baláž, 2014). The emotional response has been recognized as an essential factor in tourists' decision-making processes (Prentice, 2006).

Furthermore, familiarity with a destination and its culture is critical in influencing tourists' decision-making processes (Williams & Baláž, 2014). The cultural context of a destination can significantly impact the perceived attractiveness and suitability of the location for the traveler.

Understanding the many factors influencing the decision-making process is crucial for comprehending tourists' travel choices and developing effective strategies. Various factors, both conscious and unconscious, influence travel decisions. For example, some individuals may believe domestic travel is associated with a lack of language knowledge, assuming that communication within their native country is more fluid. However, if the motivation to travel outweighs the language barrier, they may still decide to proceed with the trip. Multiple factors acknowledged by several authors contribute to the complexity of travel decisions.

Furthermore, suppose a tourist does not possess knowledge of the local language. In that case, they may feel more secure traveling to a destination if a group member can communicate or has greater foreign language proficiency.

Participants expressed diverse opinions, some emphasizing that language is not a decisive factor, while others underscored its importance when visiting a place. However, the majority agreed they would proceed with the trip if their motivation to travel surpassed the language barrier. Additionally, other factors such as price, visiting relatives, and proximity to the destination strongly influenced their travel decisions compared to the language barrier. Most participants preferred not to travel alone if they did not speak the language. However, they would consider going if at least one group member possessed language skills. Therefore, these four subthemes are consolidated into Theme 2.

4.2.1 Reasons for Domestic Travel

Among the twelve participants, five preferred to travel within their country of residence. Participant A12, however, stated an equal inclination toward domestic and international travel. Interestingly, the reasons for choosing domestic travel were not primarily influenced by language considerations.

Participant A1 emphasized affinity for her country, stating: "I like my country". Additionally, A1 mentioned COVID-19, noting that it had created complications and concerns, which influenced the decision to stay within the country: "There was recently COVID, and thus it was a bit complicated and scary."

Similarly, A4 stated, "Because it is a beautiful country." This suggests that the aesthetic appeal of the destination played a significant role in the decision.

Participants A5 and A6 cited various barriers to international travel. A5 mentioned reasons such as lack of time, financial constraints, and a general absence of motivation, stating, "Because I don't have time, because I don't have money." A6 expressed a preference for domestic trips, potentially due to economic factors, remarking, "I have started with domestic trips for now, but I would like to travel internationally. Maybe it's related to economic reasons."

A7 offered a unique perspective, stating, "I always have time to do it when I am older, so now I want to go to further countries since I am young and don't mind waiting in airports or flying long distances." This participant seemed to prioritize international travel experiences during the present stage of life, opting for domestic travel in the older years.

Interestingly, A1 and A12 were proficient in three languages, including Valencian, a regional dialect spoken in the Valencian community, and is, therefore, not considered a foreign language. In contrast, A5 and A9 were proficient in Spanish and English. Consequently, according to Table 2: A1, A5, A9, and A12 are among the participants with fewer foreign language skills and tended to travel more domestically.

This finding is consistent with Czepkiewicz et al., 2020 who suggest that individuals with greater language proficiency are more likely to engage in international travel.

In contrast, A4 and A6 spoke multiple languages and were more inclined towards domestic travel. A4 attributed their preference to age-related factors, stating, "Now I have seen so much of the world I don't need it anymore. The world becomes smaller every time, and I am happy here for my 77 years." A6 mentioned economic reasons as the driving force behind their choice "Maybe it's related to economic reasons."

Therefore, none of the participants who preferred domestic travel seemed to base their decision on foreign language knowledge. Other factors such as personal preferences, the beauty of the country, economic considerations, and age-related perspectives appeared to have a more significant influence on their travel choices.

4.2.2 Travel Companions

The insights provided by the participants reveal how foreign language knowledge influences the composition of travel groups. It becomes apparent that certain individuals express hesitance to travel when they anticipate communication difficulties and lack companions who can bridge the language gap. Language proficiency is a key factor influencing travel decision-making, affecting comfort and the desire for an authentic experience. These findings align with the assertion made by Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) that languages play an integral in the tourist experience. Consequently, individuals who lack language skills often prefer to have a travel companion accompany them to a destination.

A9 highlights two factors that influence the decision to travel with someone: "I would go with someone, but maybe there are two factors to that if it's someone who speaks the language and someone who is also from the place. Because I think I would love to visit a country that I have never been to with someone from there because I think I would have a more authentic, real experience than to go alone." On the other hand, A1 expresses willingness to travel alone: "I could go alone." but highlights those cultural differences, rather than language, may discourage solo travel: "The problem is that there are some cultures for which I'm a bit afraid. And there, for example, I would not go alone. But not for the language but for the culture".

A2 points out the advantages of traveling in a group, where individuals can support each other, even with the assistance of technology. "I was with more people, and in the end, if one knows more, the other knows less, you help yourself with the phone." When asked if it would be enough to go to a country if no one could know any foreign language, A2 answered: "Yes, with a friend or with someone yes. Of course."

Both A3 and A6 share similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of having at least one person who can communicate to feel safe and be able to express needs A3: "If one person can speak the language, it is enough" and A6 mentions: "I would feel safer if there is someone with a good command or at least that..., it is not necessary to command, but that he can at least communicate or say what we need". A6 also adds: "If they tell me that in that place they don't speak any of the languages I speak, that I will be there alone and that I will go and they will not be able to understand me, then I wouldn't go."

A10 expresses the preference for traveling with someone who speaks the local language, stating: "I would feel more comfortable traveling with someone who speaks the local language.". Although A10 acknowledges the ability to travel alone but highlights the discomfort that may arise from communication problems stating: "I could, but it would not be a trip that I would enjoy 100%." A10 further emphasizes, "I would not feel completely comfortable knowing that I would have problems communicating."

Some participants have not traveled alone or prefer to travel with others and therefore can't tell if they would be able to do it. A11: "Also most of the time, I'm not traveling alone so I'm not going to decide alone." A3: "I still have never traveled alone until now". A3 acknowledges that solo travel is not the first option but would consider it if the motivation is strong. A3 also mentions choosing destinations where communication may be easier or seeking assistance if language barriers arise: "If nobody wants to travel with me or has no time or something like this... maybe I would try. But it was not the first thing I would do. If it's a big dream or I want to know something about the culture, and it's super important for me to travel to this country, I would do it nevertheless. But if I travel alone, I would choose an easier way because it's still hard."

A5 made some interesting contributions stating: "Yes, of course. Well, I think so because if I only speak a bit of English, I am not going far alone." A5 suggests that knowing the language is beneficial but also emphasizes the importance of traveling with someone that commands the language: "The fact would be, knowing the language, but if not, traveling with someone that commands the language." A5 also shares personal experiences of trips: "In the case of France, I was with a person who spoke French, and when I went to Poland, I was with people who spoke English and were even living there, so they knew how to communicate well." A5 highlights the limitations of traveling alone with limited English proficiency, indicating that language skills are essential for successful independent experiences.

Based on the contributions, it can be inferred that foreign language knowledge significantly impacts travel decisions. The findings also suggest that the language proficiency of a travel companion can compensate for individual language limitations.

4.2.3 Travel Motivation

Crompton (1979) emphasizes the significance of travel motivation as a fundamental factor that drives tourist behavior, where motivation arises when individuals seek to fulfill specific needs (Mill & Morrison, 2002). The participants' responses revealed that language proficiency becomes a secondary consideration when individuals are motivated to visit a particular destination.

The participants expressed compelling reasons for selecting a destination, illustrating that these motivations precede language constraints. For instance, A3 highlighted the aspiration to travel to Portugal "Portugal because it's a dream for me to travel." The appealing weather conditions and scenic beauty of the place were also influential factors "Because the weather is better there, there is a lot of sun and a beautiful sea." A1 stated, "I was young when I went to Italy, so I would choose Italy for that reason." meaning that A1 would go to the destination because of nostalgic memories.

Similarly, A2, A8, and A11 prioritized the exploration of new places and cultures in their travel experiences:

"I would choose Greece because I have never been to Greece" (A8)

"Most of the time I love to travel to new countries or new places I was never before." (A11)

"To discover other places, cultures, and gastronomies." (A2)

A9 revealed that visiting relatives abroad is the primary motive for international travel, indicating that personal connections and familial ties can override language considerations. A9 stated: "As I have a lot of family abroad, maybe I would say abroad. I go back to London probably more than I travel to Spain."

The participants' responses indicate that while language plays a role in travel decision-making, it is often overshadowed by individuals' stronger motivations to visit a destination. The push factors (Lam & Hsu, 2006), which are the desire to fulfill specific needs, discover new places, and maintain personal connections emerge as key driving forces, suggesting that language barriers are not insurmountable obstacles in their travel choices.

4.2.4 Factors affecting the Travel Decision

Within the realm of travel decision-making, various factors come into play, and the impact of language proficiency is not perceived as paramount by most participants.

When asked about their considerations when traveling, participants mentioned travel motivations as push factors and various other factors such as landscape, safety, and proximity as pull factors (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

Uysal and Hagan (1993) that push and pull factors motivate tourists' destination choices. Furthermore, when specifically asked about the most critical factor, language did not emerge as a primary consideration among participants.

A1 made noteworthy contributions, emphasizing that language alone does not dictate their decision-making process, stating, "I would not only base it on the language." Their travel decisions primarily revolve around their desire to explore landscapes and immerse themselves in various cultural aspects; as A1 explained, "I would base it on what I want to see, the landscape, and everything else." Furthermore, A1 emphasized that culture holds greater significance than language, asserting, "So for me, culture affects more [...] than language."

For A6 and A3, economic factors take precedence in their travel decisions. A3 highlighted the importance of affordability, stating, "That I can pay for it," and A6, considering the current employment situation, prioritized economic considerations, explaining, "In my case, economy. Because currently, I am not working, and then I consider the economy more." A6 also acknowledged safety as a significant factor, noting, "Safety. That it is a safe country where I will not have problems, that I can go, and that I will also have fun."

Distance is another factor considered during the travel decision-making process. A10 stated, "How to get to a place. If you can go by plane, by car, by bus. How much would the trip last, and how much would the ticket be?" Similarly, A11 expressed, "I think the relation of distance and time I have to travel." A2 also considered proximity, stating, "Maybe Portugal because it's nearer."

A9 regarded political stability as more significant than language barriers when selecting a destination, expressing, "the political stability of the country, I think. That is more of a concern for me than the languages." A9 also mentioned that the positive information received from someone regarding Montenegro influenced their choice: "Purely from a conversation that I had today with someone that told me amazing things about Montenegro."

An intriguing aspect of the interviews involved four questions requiring participants to select between two possible destinations and provide the rationale behind their choices. It was observed that most participants tended to opt for destinations where the spoken language aligned with their language knowledge, although they were not consciously aware of this connection. This finding aligns with the assertion made by (Nagai et al., 2020), which suggests that tourists prefer destinations where they can communicate in their language. Subsequently, a reflection was conducted on the chosen destinations, the participants' language proficiency, and whether language played a role in their decisions. In response to this inquiry, some participants acknowledged the influence of language, albeit without prior realization, while others were uncertain but acknowledged the possibility.

Conversely, some participants chose destinations where language barriers were outweighed by other factors deemed to have a more significant impact.

A8 and A9 indicated that language did not affect their choices:

“I think that everything is up to the person because some people are very affected by the fact that they are not understanding or speak the language of the country they are visiting.” (A8)

“I think it’s a very complex question, and I think it’s very subjective.” and “I think it’s different when you’re if you’ve grown up traveling around and meeting new people and things like that. Then it doesn’t seem as intimidating if you speak to a 40-year-old who’s never left their country. I think the idea to that person to go to a country where they don’t speak his language is far scarier than it would be to someone like me, for example.” (A9)

From these answers, one can understand that every person makes a different choice and is influenced by experiences, background, and personality. As A8 and A9 stated, some individuals might be more affected by language than others which coincides with several authors stating that travel preferences vary from individual to individual (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; McCrae & Costa, 1996).

As stated by Wegner (2004), most thought processes are unconscious, which aligns with the responses of A1, A7, and A10, which indicated that they did not believe language had an influence on their choices but were open to the possibility of unconscious influence:

“I don’t think so. But everything could be, maybe unconsciously.” (A1)

“It could be that the factor of language, in this case, plays a role and that we might sometimes choose a destination because it will make communication easier. Also, at least in my case, Italy means a lot, and therefore going there feels like going home, and I feel comfortable going. It can be that it relates to language unconsciously, but I’m not afraid of being unable to communicate.” (A7)

“I think that it influences the choice. Maybe not directly, but unconsciously, yes. It is a matter of safety.” (A10)

“Maybe because I’m speaking or understanding a bit of Spanish. But as I said, I was not directly thinking about languages.” (A11)

A4, A5, and A6 experienced a shift in their perspectives throughout the interview. Initially, they claimed that language did not influence their choices but later admitted that it did.

“Before, I said no, but actually, yes! Yes, yes! It has an influence, yes!” (A5)

“Honestly, you have made me change my mind. Because you have aroused my curiosity in the way of choosing that I was unaware of, yes. I indeed told you no from the beginning, but my answers contradicted my words. Correct, you are right.” (A6)

“Actually, yes.” (A4). Interestingly, all the destinations A4 ultimately chose were places where the local language aligned with the language proficiency.

A6 acknowledged the importance of language from the beginning, stating: “The fact of being able to communicate is a super key factor.” and further emphasized: “Not considering that I love Italy, if I had to choose Germany, it would be tough for me because of the language because I wouldn’t understand anything if they are people that don’t know English. Or, like Greece, I would also not understand anything, and I would not feel sure, not comfortable, and I would not enjoy my vacation as I would enjoy them if I knew the language. It is very important.”

The responses from participants highlight the individualized nature of travel decision-making, shaped by experiences, background, and personality, which aligns with the notion that the preference of travel destinations is strongly influenced by personality (McCrae & Costa, 1996). While some individuals may exhibit greater sensitivity to language barriers, others may attribute less significance to linguistic factors. Nevertheless, participants' reflections and subsequent choices during the interview demonstrated that language has an influence, albeit sometimes unconsciously. The findings suggest that the role of language in leisure travel decisions is complex and varies among individuals.

4.3 Globalization and Evolution

The advent of globalization has ushered in many transformations, fostering increased interconnectedness among nations and individuals (Steger, 2017). These changes have had profound effects on various aspects of our lives. Notably, as people engage in greater cross-cultural interactions, they become more attuned to the impact of language barriers, leading to a heightened emphasis on language acquisition and the significance of foreign languages in daily life and decision-making. The diversity of languages worldwide poses challenges to effective communication, thus elevating the prominence of English as a global lingua franca, extensively studied and employed to facilitate cross-national interactions (Giddens, 1990; Crystal, 2003). Remarkably, all participants in the study acknowledged that a basic understanding of English is often perceived as sufficient for communicating in foreign countries.

Over time, societal progress and technological advancements have propelled significant developments across various domains, with communication experiencing remarkable evolution through the emergence and progression of technologies such as telephones, radios, and emails (Shabir et al., 2015). The participants attested to technology's transformative impact on communication, expressing that it has substantially alleviated language barriers. They readily rely on mobile phones and translation tools while traveling, rendering communication obstacles increasingly surmountable. Technology integration into everyday life has fostered greater ease and convenience in intercultural communication.

Moreover, the evolving landscape of globalization has engendered shifts in individuals' mentalities. The contemporary society promotes open-mindedness and a desire for cross-cultural interactions. People today are more inclined to engage with individuals from diverse nationalities and view negative experiences in foreign countries not as indicative of inherent cultural traits but as incidents that could occur anywhere. This heightened open-mindedness and adventurous spirit was evident in the participants' interviews, aligning with prior research indicating that open-minded individuals exhibit greater travel motivation and a propensity for seeking unique experiences (Czepkiewicz et al., 2020; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

In summary, the third theme, "Globalization and Evolution," encapsulates the profound impact of globalization on travel decision-making. It underscores the rising significance of English as a global language, the transformative influence of technology in mitigating language barriers, and the emergence of a more open-minded mentality. These factors collectively shape the dynamics of travel choices, with communication obstacles progressively diminishing in significance, thus fostering greater opportunities for cross-cultural exploration and enriching travel experiences.

4.3.1 English as a Global Language

English, being widely recognized as a global language, emerged as a prominent theme in the study. As shown in Table 2, among the 12 participants, only one reported not knowing English, while the rest possessed at least basic proficiency. They generally believed that this level of proficiency was sufficient for basic communication needs. Furthermore, the participants unanimously agreed that encountering a country where English is not spoken is rare, instilling a sense of security when considering destinations where the local language is unfamiliar. They perceived the ability to communicate at least the essentials in English as a safety net.

A1 initially expressed the willingness to travel alone: "I could go alone" but reconsidered when asked about traveling to a country without English or any familiar language: "Not even knowing English, no, at least something."

A11 acknowledged a preference for speaking the native language. Still, it acknowledged that English is adequate when necessary: "Of course, it's easier when you speak the language, but I think if they would speak another language and I can communicate in English there for me, nowadays it's not a problem anymore." A4 echoed a similar sentiment: "Yes, I really think that English is enough when necessary."

A6 even expressed concern when the possibility of English communication was absent: "It would be tough for me because of the language because I wouldn't understand anything if they are people that don't know English."

The prevailing perception among the participants was that English can be spoken everywhere, aligning with Crystal's assertion (2003). Notably, A9, as the sole native English speaker, offered an intriguing perspective: "No, I think I would find it interesting... it's hard; being English, I have rarely gone to a place where they didn't speak English with someone." This perspective suggests a different perception of language barriers, with a curiosity to experience destinations where English is not commonly spoken. However, it is worth noting that A9 also expressed a willingness to pay more for the ability to communicate if confronted with a destination lacking English proficiency, as stated in 4.1.3.

A7 stated, "I am just traveling in Europe, and here, more or less, everyone can communicate a bit in English." Furthermore, A3 recounted previous travel experiences, remarking, "It was okay because most of the time, the other people can speak English or something like that... so it works." A4 reaffirmed Crystal's notion (2003), stating, "Yes... of course, I can try in English, which is a bit better because it is an international language."

4.3.2 Reliance on the Phone for Communication Assistance

Several participants emphasized their reliance on mobile phones and translation tools to overcome language barriers. The availability of translation apps and the assurance that they can effectively communicate using their phones have alleviated concerns about language-related challenges in travel decision-making.

A1 highlighted the significance of phone-based translation tools: "Even if it's basic, yes, because they understand me and with my phone... If I don't have my phone, then it's more complicated." Furthermore, A1 emphasized the transformative impact of translation technology by stating, "No. Because nowadays you can translate everything." Similarly, A6 expressed a sense of safety derived from being able to use translation tools: "With the translator, it is like you feel safer."

While most of the younger participants explicitly mentioned relying on their phones, the oldest participant (A4) did not consider this option and instead mentioned the presence of tour guides: "There is also usually a guide." This discrepancy can be attributed to generational differences, as older individuals may have experienced travel in an era where such technology was not available for instant translation. A11 and A12 supported this observation:

"Today when you can also use your phone and translate stuff with apps, it's easier than it was in the past." (A11)

"Especially years ago, when things were physically filled out, where it was much more complicated to have an instant translation of a text where you had to interact with a man, you couldn't write on the phone and show it to him... Therefore, that has changed. Even today, reading a sign, you can scan it, and change the language." (A12)

Although A3 mentioned the possibility of tour guides who may speak English, the remaining 10 participants did not consider tour guides as a significant factor. However, A3 also acknowledged the availability of translation tools, such as Google Translate, which have become increasingly accessible: "But now you have, for example, the option to use Google Translate [...] so you can translate."

A2 expressed a sense of indifference toward language barriers, citing the presence of a phone and a travel companion as sufficient support: "For me, it is enough with the phone with the person I go with; the rest can speak the language they want."

A8 highlighted the use of the internet to gather information about a destination, including its characteristics and the opinions of other travelers: "Nowadays it's so easy just to go to the internet and check the conditions, the prices, the communication, the culture." Furthermore, A8 acknowledged the substantial impact of online platforms where individuals can share their experiences and perspectives. "I think quite a lot because now you can access so many web pages and places where people tell what they think."

Participants demonstrated a reliance on mobile phones and translation tools to navigate language barriers during travel. The availability of such technology has substantially influenced their perception of language-related challenges, providing a sense of security and facilitating communication in unfamiliar environments. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the internet as a valuable resource for gathering information and insights about travel destinations.

4.3.3 Mentality

The paradigm shift resulting from increased travel and interconnections with diverse individuals has significantly impacted participants' cognitive frameworks. Presently, individuals exhibit greater curiosity toward exploring new destinations and engaging with unfamiliar cultures. Participants realized that both positive and negative experiences cannot be attributed solely to a particular country but rather can occur anywhere in the world. As a result, such experiences have minimal impact on travel decisions, and language barriers are viewed as less significant. It is worth noting that participants have exhibited a higher level of language proficiency, as evidenced by Table 2, illustrating their knowledge of multiple foreign languages.

While language preferences may vary among countries and individuals, there is an overall inclination towards greater engagement with people from different regions and a genuine interest in hearing and learning about other languages and cultures.

Following a negative experience, A1 stated, "It could have also happened in Spain or in other places, where maybe, for example, they don't have the same habits as the place where I live."

This remark reflects A1's understanding that negative experiences are not exclusive to a particular country. Furthermore, A1 acknowledged that when language barriers arise, locals are often helpful: "But there are always good people; when you don't understand them, they try to help you in all possible ways." A1 also emphasized that getting lost is the worst outcome when faced with communication challenges: "The only thing that can happen is that you get lost." Similarly, A7 expressed, "Yes, and if not, someone can help me translate, and locals are usually kind and positive." Moreover, A11 indicated that a negative experience was not related to language, country, culture, or its people: "I could already know that this is not normal so that had nothing to do with language or with the country or with the culture or people who are living there."

When asked about the potential language barrier in Greece, A2 responded, "It's not a problem. I will adapt myself." Likewise, A4 expressed an interest in exploring different countries, noting that it adds to the allure of travel "Looking out for a different country is more interesting". Furthermore, A8 stated, "I think it is quite interesting to see some other places apart from my own country."

When choosing Greece as a possible destination if it would not be a problem since they have such a different language, was asked to A2 and replied: "It's not a problem. I will adapt myself." Similarly, A4 noted: "looking out for a different country is more interesting". Moreover, A8 said: "I think it is quite interesting to see some other places apart from my own country."

A7 made an intriguing observation that language barriers may not be significant, possibly due to the transformative experience of participating in an Erasmus program, which fosters personal growth. Additionally, A7 expressed, "No, I don't see it as a barrier, but maybe it is because I have done an Erasmus, and that opens your mind a lot. Before my Erasmus, I was different; even if I knew languages, I was not traveling that much." A7 further shared, "I have no idea about San Marino, what it is, or if it even exists laughs, but it makes me more curious, and I want to discover it."

Participants A8 and A10 expressed views indicative of open-mindedness:

"You have to be more open-minded and give it a chance to go there despite you are not able to communicate." (A8)

"I would rather make an effort with another language to be able to go." (A10)

Furthermore, participants A8, A9, and A10 emphasized the importance of respect and proper behavior when interacting with locals, noting that individuals who demonstrate these qualities are likely to receive friendly assistance:

"Some people are very affected by the fact that they are not understanding or speak the language of the country they are visiting... If your attitude is right and you behave properly, people will help you handle things." (A8)

"But I think it's a nice way as well of just sort of embracing a different culture and being respectful to another culture and people is: making an effort with their language." (A9)

"It is also a sympathy factor. I mean, making people of the country feel comfortable."(A10).

Participant A9 expressed an intriguing perspective, noting that even in the presence of a language barrier, it is interesting to listen to people speaking different languages "I think it's interesting to listen to other people speak and I think it's a fun challenge as well."

Language barriers are perceived as less significant in the contemporary travel context, with individuals exhibiting a greater willingness to engage with people from different cultures. Proficiency in multiple languages has contributed to this openness. Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of respect, proper behavior, and active efforts in communication, as they observed that such qualities foster positive interactions with locals.

These findings align with the observations made by Alcázar et al. (2019), who found that tourists speaking the local language tend to experience greater friendliness from locals.

5. Conclusion

In order to provide a comprehensive conclusion to this thesis, the final section will elucidate how the objectives of this study were successfully achieved by addressing the research question. This thesis makes a valuable contribution to academic knowledge by delineating the effects of foreign language proficiency on decisions about leisure travel and exploring other factors that may influence the impact of languages on such decisions. Using a phenomenological approach, valuable insights were gained, and the various components of the leisure travel decision-making process were analyzed. The following research question was addressed to fully comprehend language's influence and fulfill the research objectives:

"How does foreign language knowledge impact the leisure travel decision?"

The research question has been addressed through interviews and participant contributions, and a relationship between foreign language proficiency and decision-making in leisure travel has been demonstrated. However, it has been found that this influence is outweighed by other factors, such as the motivation to visit a place, the intention to reunite with family members, or the desire to explore a specific destination.

It is important to acknowledge that the extent of language impact depends on various factors, including lifestyle, past experiences, and the destination's image.

The fact remains that the impact of foreign languages is more significant than commonly believed, as it operates unconsciously, prompting us to gravitate toward destinations where a familiar language is spoken, provided there are no overriding motives for visiting a particular place. This trend has been observed in participants' responses when selecting destinations: without a specific relationship or motivation, they tend to choose destinations with similar languages.

Notably, a substantial body of literature addresses decision-making processes, foreign languages, and languages in tourism individually. However, there is a notable gap in the existing research regarding the intersection of these three areas. Specifically, the role of languages in leisure travel decision-making has not been extensively studied. Nonetheless, this is a critical aspect to investigate, given the fundamental importance of communication in travel experiences. Moreover, the expectations of this research have been met, as the influence of languages on travel decisions has been observed.

After the data collection via qualitative interviews and the thematic data analysis, the findings show that participants are fully aware of the inherent benefits associated with mastering the language of their destination, which motivates them to prefer destinations where they can easily communicate as it provides them with a sense of security and the opportunity to be more than mere tourists, enabling them to integrate into the culture of the visited country. This preference persists if no other motivation surpasses the potential language barrier. The desire to explore new places, interest in a specific culture or cuisine, and stories shared by acquaintances about positive experiences in certain countries are characteristics that outweigh the language limitation, as demonstrated in the conducted interviews. Consequently, knowledge of foreign languages influences decision-making, albeit unconsciously and to a lesser extent than other factors. The choice of a destination ultimately depends on the individual's relationship with the destination and desire for that particular place.

The findings from the interviews have revealed that when there is no prior interest in a specific destination, individuals tend to select destinations where the language is familiar to them. However, once a specific motivation arises, it often carries more weight than the language barrier that may be present at the destination. Although English is recognized as a global language used for communication worldwide, individuals tend to feel more secure if they master the native language of the location or choose a destination where they can communicate in their mother tongue.

This research provides valuable information that can be utilized to develop tourism strategies to attract suitable tourists to destinations while promoting sustainable tourism. These strategies consider the influence of foreign language proficiency on individuals' decision-making processes, enabling them to make informed choices.

This understanding is crucial for various stakeholders, including the tourism industry, destination marketers, and policymakers, as it allows them to meet the needs of travelers effectively, devise impactful marketing strategies, and contribute to the sustainable development of tourism.

Furthermore, the impact of foreign language proficiency extends beyond the tourism sector. It has significant implications for language education programs, travel language services, cultural exchange initiatives, access to information, travel independence, and perceived ease of travel. These insights can play a crucial role in shaping the design and implementation of language education initiatives, enhancing the provision of language services tailored for travelers, fostering meaningful cultural exchange programs, improving access to information for travelers, empowering individuals with greater travel independence, and overall enhancing the perceived convenience of travel experiences.

However, there are some limitations to this research. Firstly, investigating a topic that addresses a knowledge gap requires substantial time and effort. This study involved six months of dedicated research, including an extensive review of existing literature, exploring participants' perspectives, and rigorous analysis. Despite the time invested, it is important to note that even more time would be required to achieve even more robust and comprehensive results. Additionally, conducting qualitative research poses challenges in terms of time constraints. Each interview must be transcribed accurately, which demands significant time and effort. Consequently, this limits the number of individuals who can be interviewed. Expanding the sample size could provide a more diverse range of insights and enhance the overall findings. Furthermore, conducting qualitative research introduces inherent subjectivity. The thematic analysis relies on interpretations and can be influenced by the researcher's perspective. However, in this study, efforts were made to maintain objectivity.

For future research, conducting a quantitative analysis is recommended as it would allow for a broader examination of the impact of languages on leisure destination choices. Furthermore, investigating whether age influences language perception when traveling is suggested, given that the interviews revealed significant differences among older participants, who exhibited distinct perspectives regarding language. In such cases, foreign language proficiency tended to have less influence on the decision to travel for leisure. Another recommendation is to analyze the specific stage of the decision-making process in leisure travel where language proficiency exerts the greatest impact.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Introductory question

1. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

Socio-demographic data

2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age?
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
5. In which country do you live?

Language knowledge

6. What is your mother tongue/s?
7. Which other languages do you speak?
8. What is your English level?

Leisure travel and foreign languages

9. Do you travel more domestically or internationally for your leisure trips? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.
 - a. What is the reason for traveling more domestically/internationally?
10. What was your last destination for leisure purposes? Why?
 - a. Did language influence your choice? How?/Why?
11. Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language? Why?
12. Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? Why?
13. Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?
 - a. How was your experience?
 - b. Was it enough with English?
14. Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?
15. What do you consider when choosing a destination?
 - a. What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

16. Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?
 - a. Explain what it was.
 - b. Did that experience change your way of thinking about traveling internationally?
Why?
17. When choosing a destination, do you research about it?
 - a. How does the obtained information on the research affect your decision?
 - b. Do you research the destination's local languages and their foreign language skills?
18. Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans?
 - a. What type?
19. What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?
20. What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?
21. What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?
22. What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?
23. What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?
24. Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

Appendix 2: Interview transcripts

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 30/04 **Duration:** 17:58

Interviewee: A1

Location: Villingen-Schwenningen

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous interview. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, we are going to answer some socio-demographic questions. Therefore, could you tell me your gender?

A1: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and what is your age range? I mean, how old are you?

A1: 30.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the highest educational level you have obtained?

A1: Master.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, now we are moving to the section on language knowledge. What is your mother tongue/s?

A1: Valencian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which other languages do you speak?

A1: Castilian and a little bit of English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: The next question is related to the previous one; If you stated that you can speak English, what is your level?

A1: At this moment, basic.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your country of residence?

A1: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, this was the language section. Now we are going to the section where dig deeper into the destination.

Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic is in your country. International is to a foreign country.

A1: Domestic

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Since you stated domestic, what is the reason for doing that?

A1: I like my country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Is something pulling you back when traveling to a foreign country?

A1: I have to take the plane, and for the problems that there are, like you can't have liquids with you, you can not bring this and that. And now, for example, that the suitcase of 10 kg... You can't take it anymore like before; you must pay for it. There was recently COVID, and thus it was a bit complicated and scary. And that was important.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay. And you consider that language also affects when it comes to choosing your destination. So, for example, if you can't communicate in the native language or English, does that stop you when choosing a destination?

A1: If I can communicate in English, even with basic English, it is not a problem.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, with the level you have right now, do you consider that you can manage in a country?

A1: If I get lost, I get lost, but yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And is your decision based on if you go, for example... could you go alone to a country? or should it be with the company even if none speaks the language properly?

A1: I could go alone

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Could you go alone even if you do not know the language or English?

A1: Yes... Well, actually, not even knowing English, no, at least something.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, but with the level you have right now. Could you?

A1: Even if it's basic, yes, because they understand me and with my phone... If I don't have my phone, then it's more complicated. I need the phone and internet to know where I am because orientation sense is awful, and I need some vocabulary with my phone... alone where I want. In the end, people understand me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination?

A1: Germany

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? Why?

A1: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why did it not affect your election? I mean, What was your main motivation to go to this place?

A1: To visit a friend

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you have visited Germany if it was not for your friend? And why?

A1: My friend was the main reason, but I would have gone anyway if I wanted to go because it was interesting.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you could go to a place where you could communicate easily and to one where not, which would you choose and why?

A1: Well... I would not only base it on the language. I would base it on what I want to see, the landscape, and everything else. Therefore, language is not something that...

knowing minimum English, I think they can understand you more or less. If you have your phone, you can translate, you can... the only thing that can happen is that you get lost. But you will find the way in the end.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But I mean... does that language limitation let's say, affect when it comes to choosing a destination? For example, do you choose a nearby destination? For example, out of Europe? Would it be more difficult for you to go because of not knowing how the country is, or for not knowing the language they speak...?

A1: Because of language, no, but maybe because of the culture, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, with your actual English knowledge, it would be enough?

A1: I would manage with what I have. But the problem is that there are some cultures for which I'm a bit afraid. And there, for example, I would not go alone. But not for the language but for the culture.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it depends on the culture, there is some country where you would go, but your decision is more affected by culture than by language.

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language? Why?

A1: If I could choose, of course, then the trip changes completely when you can communicate. However, if I want to go to a place, I don't care about the language they speak.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? Why?

A1: If I would pay more? Yes, I would be eager to pay a bit more.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak the native language?

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A1: Well, an experience more... good. In the end, speaking as I could and speaking the language you know and with the pictures and doing like this with the finger showing things, at the end they understand you.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, so is it enough with English and the phone?

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you think to confirm that it is enough to speak English to communicate and at the end, you are on vacation, you don't need excellent skills.

A1: I think so, but it is true that if they tell me that I pay not a high amount but a small amount, a good amount, and I would, for example, have a help phone where I could call 24h or from this hour to that hour and consult, then I would pay for it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So included for this extra amount, they should give you additional help, for example, a phone where you could consult?

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Because they would ensure you can communicate in the language, you would do it if you had a guarantee.

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When it comes to choosing a destination, what do you take into consideration? What comes to your mind? What factors make you go for a destination?

A1: Well, the landscape, the history, and all that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, the landscape is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

A1: Yes. It is the history of our antecessors; we can see how everything has been evolving. And the landscapes. Then I also like to see different cultures, but I am a bit afraid of some cultures.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language? If yes, explain what it was.

A1: Well, bad experience, no, but it is true that I, for example... don't speak French, and when I went to France. I remember that I was going to change to another train and it seemed that there was a woman behind me trying to rob me and then a French person screamed from the other side and I did not understand him, then I was saying "what do you want? I haven't done anything. What is happening? What do you want?" And in the end, until the guy realized that I did not understand him... then he said it in English, I realized, I turned, and the women left running, so after I said thank you to the guy. The problem was that I did not understand what he was saying. So I think that was the worst experience. But actually, my brother had another experience in that they stole their bus in Italy. They stole the whole bus because it was supposed. I don't know if it was like that, but my brother said that he saw how the bus driver was paying in every place they stopped, and this time he saw that they were not paying anything. They stopped to eat and when they returned to take the was which had the suitcases and everything, and they were going back to Spain, the bus disappeared with everything. But those are the worst experiences...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do you think that that is because of not understanding the situation or the language?

A1: I think my experience was because of not understanding the guy, and I think I was for not knowing the habits there. Because maybe if my brother and his colleagues had paid, that would not have happened. In the end, if there are Mafias or something like that and you don't know, then... you have a problem.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for you, it's more a barrier to not knowing the culture, habits or how people act than the language?

A1: Yes, because you can say something, they can maybe understand you. But in your culture, that is not offending anyone, and there it is, so that can be a problem. So for me, culture affects more and the way of thinking more than language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did that experience change your way of thinking about traveling internationally?

A1: No

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Why? Why hasn't it changed.?

A1: Because what happened to me was not severe... so I would return to France without problems. I liked it and my brother, for example, where he went... I would go back to Italy, where it happened to my brother. I think that that happened in Italy, but it could have also happened in Spain or in other places, where maybe, for example, they don't have the same habits as the place where I live. Because in the same country, habits change from one place to another.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A1: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When it comes to traveling, how much research do you typically do about a travel destination's local language and culture before deciding to visit? Regarding culture, language... how much time do you dedicate to it to inform yourself about the country?

A1: It depends. It depends because if I have time, I like to look. But, indeed, it is not much like starting to look for the culture, but I start to look more at everything nice to visit; I see some... I enter these tourist guides there, and maybe I see important things, depending on my time. Because when you work, time is not... much

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So actually, more than depending on the destination, it depends more on your personal life, the time you have.

A1: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: You mainly prioritize what to see rather than what culture they have and which language they speak. Will I be able to communicate?

A1: I would say yes because in the end, language... with a little bit of English, people usually speak it, and then you can manage. And then when you have the phone, only by having the phone... because only with my English level would probably be difficult, maybe with signs. Maybe it is an international language; it might be... But if you have your phone and internet... nowadays it is easier than before. Before, maybe it would have been more difficult for me, but now it's easier, I think.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? What type? (e.g., difficulty booking accommodations or transportation due to language barriers)?

A1: No. Because nowadays you can translate everything

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In your opinion, what are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A1: Uff, I think there are many advantages to speaking their language. Because I also think that they feel more comfortable, but it is true that when... there are always good people and people that don't care about anything. But there are always good people; when you don't understand them, they try to help you in all possible ways. In English, with gestures or however. But I think that it would be super positive to speak in their language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you think your experience would change, but... the experience in the place would change, of course, because you could have more communication or get to know more cultures, but it would not change when choosing your destination, right? For example, if you know you can go to a place where you can communicate, would you choose that destination if you had two options?

A1: So for me, the place... I don't choose a place depending on whether I can speak their language... at the end, it's what I say. You can go everywhere with some English and my phone. So, I choose the place depending on what I want to visit. For example, visit a friend that is in a place, and you go to that place. I want to visit... I don't know... I would like to visit... the pyramids and all their culture, so I am going to Egypt. I would go depending on the things I want to see and what I am in the mood for, not depending on the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now, I will propose several alternatives, and you have to tell me which you would choose and why.

So, if you had to choose, for example, between visiting Italy and Germany, which would you visit and why? What would be your first motivation to choose one or the other?

A1: Uy, you have caught me because I don't know. Right now... I think I would choose Germany right now, oh no, I meant Italy because it's been a long since I went there. And Germany... Here I am. Right now, I don't see it because of the time ago. I would choose Italy. I was young when I went to Italy, so I would choose Italy for that reason.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, if you had to choose, for example, between visiting Portugal and Montenegro, which would you visit and why?

A1: I would choose Portugal, but because it has been a long time since I am seeing offers to go to Portugal, super beautiful place, and I am curious. Moreover, there are a lot of offers and... a lot of coasts and to be sincere, I like the coast a lot.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok. If you had to choose between Greece and Italy?

A1: Well, I would choose Greece because I have never been there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok. And between Spain and San Marino?

A1: Well... Spain. I am Spanish, and therefore I would choose the next option. So, San Marino because of seeing more places, how people live, their stories, and everything else.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And between these options, even if unconsciously, do you think you choose them because of their similarity of culture or language to Spain? For example, Italy compared to Germany. Apart from your reason, you have already been recently in Germany. Can it be possible that you have chosen Italy for the proximity they have regarding Spanish people?

A1: Well... I don't think so. But everything could be, maybe unconsciously, but I don't think so because Italian people could more or less understand me in my mother tongue. But they won't understand me completely. Well, maybe in Valenciano, they could understand me a bit more.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Finally, do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making? Something you can come up with that you could add?

A1: I keep my thought of what I told you before. If there would be some company that for a not very high payment could give you like a support service even if it is an assistance to help you maybe to choose a train or to help you to say "this" or why are they looking bad at me when I say "this." Of course, for them, it is a lack of respect, you know? Someone that could help you with these things. For example, I would have paid it, and It is true that in this interview, my point of view would change entirely if you told me that I don't have a phone to take with me. Then I think my experience would change because I would consider the places nearer to my comfort zone, Spain, and my language. Then an Italian at the end, more or less, if you speak to him in Spanish or Valencian, they understand a lot. For example, I would be more tied to language, and that... But that is what I say: things change with a phone nowadays, with the internet...

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 30/04 **Duration:** 10:40

Interviewee: A2

Location: Villingen-Schwenningen

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A2: Yes, I agree

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year for leisure purposes?

A2: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First, I will ask some socio-demographic questions. Could you tell me your gender?

A2: Male.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A2: 32.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A2: High school.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now, we are moving on to the section on language knowledge. What is your mother tongue/s?

A2: Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which other languages do you speak?

A2: Valencian, and English a little bit

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your level since you just stated that you can speak English?

A2: Basic-basic

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So this was the language section. Now we are moving on to the destination election. I will get closer because I am afraid that the recorder cannot hear well. Then, Considering that a domestic trip is in your country and an international trip is abroad, Do you travel more domestically or internationally?

A2: International

Why do you travel more internationally?

A2: Well, to discover other places, cultures, and gastronomies

What was your last destination? Why?

A2: Germany. Because I had never been before and my girlfriend has a friend there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Why?

A2: Because I don't consider language, I think about the place. For me, it is enough with the phone with the person I go with; the rest can speak the language they want.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you don't consider that language is an obstacle when traveling to a foreign country? With the basics of English, can you go to that destination?

A2: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you make the same decision if you went alone? Or would you prefer to travel with someone because of not knowing the language that well?

A2: With a person.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you wouldn't do it alone? Would you travel to another country with the language skills you have?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you could travel to a destination where you can speak the language and a destination where you can't, which would you choose?

A2: The one I know the language of.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why would you make this decision?

A2: Because then I can understand, it's more comfortable and easy for me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate there?

A2: Yes, of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Why would you pay more, or what would you expect for this additional payment when you arrive at the destination? Or when it comes to choosing the destination?

A2: That they make it easier for me to understand something, that they would translate it for me, or I don't know... that it would be simpler for me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you could not speak the native language?

A2: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How did you decide to go to that place if you knew that you were not going to be able to communicate?

A2: What I said... I was with more people, and in the end, if one knows more, the other knows less, you help yourself with the phone.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, with the phone and the basics you can know or any of your group of English, it would be enough to go to the destination?

A2: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would it be enough if no one would know any foreign language, only with the phone?

A2: Yes, with a friend or with someone, yes. Of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A2: The things I can visit, what I can eat. Basically... that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that is the first that pops up in your mind?

A2: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

A2: The tourist places I can visit.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When it comes to choosing a destination, how much time do you spend researching the place? Mainly to see what type of language they have and their culture.

A2: None. I simply go to the place, I see the nice things that I can see, the food if I am going to like it, and that is it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In your opinion, what are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A2: All of them. Well, all the advantages. To get understood, to know everything.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, do you think that your decision would be different if they would propose you two destinations and in one of them, you were able to communicate in the native language?

A2: It depends on the destination, but probably yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it would depend on the destination. For example, if it was one that attracts you more, then this problem would not affect you that much.

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, now I will propose several destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would use and some arguments for why you chose that destination and not the other. If you have, for example, the option to go to Italy and Germany, which one of the two would you choose?

A2: Italy because I have just been to Germany, and I went to Italy when I was younger, and I saw it differently when I was younger than I would see it now. And I would like to see it now that I am more adult because of that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Suppose you have to choose between Portugal and Montenegro. Which one would you choose?

A2: Pfff... I don't feel attracted by any of them. Maybe Portugal because it's nearer

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok. And between Greece and Italy?

A2: Greece.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the reason for choosing this destination?

A2: I have never been there, and it looks nice from the pictures; the food is also nice, the beaches are amazing. Greece, without a doubt.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And would you not be scared by the fact that they have such a different language than yours? They even have a different alphabet.

A2: It's not a problem. I will adapt myself.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And between Spain and San Marino, which one would you choose?

A2: San Marino, because I have never been there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And some of these choices you have made, do you think that you made them because of language? For example, Italy because it's more similar to Spain or Greece because the culture is more similar to the one we have in Spain?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Finally, do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So there is nothing that would help you to choose a destination or something that would make it impossible for you to go to that destination regarding languages and the place?

A2: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you consider that simply that, with the fact that you have the phone and someone to travel with, only if you feel attracted to the destination you go and if you don't care about anything? Even if it was out of Europe with a culture and absolutely different?

A2: Enough.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you very much for your time.

A2: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 12/05 **Duration:** 24:00

Interviewee: A3

Location: Stuttgart

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A3: Yes, I agree.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. First of all, considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year for leisure purposes?

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, What is your gender?

A3: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A3: 26.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A3: Master.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, In which country do you live?

A3: Germany.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your mother tongue?

A3: My mother tongue?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, the language you were taught by your mother

A3: German.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak besides from your mother tongue?

A3: Speak fluently or only...?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: It can be that you communicate, even at a basic level, that you can communicate.

A3: Okay, English, French, and Spanish, but I learned Spanish in school and also practiced in some countries, but I lost a lot of this language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And If you... so you said that you can speak English; what do you consider that is your level?

A3: Basic.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Basic or basic intermediate?

A3: In English, maybe basic-intermediate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that was regarding your data. Now we are going to the next section, which is about destination election.

So, Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country, and International means to a foreign country.

A3: International.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and what is the reason that you travel more internationally?

A3: Good question. I am interested in other cultures and countries, and I think looking out for a different country is more interesting... I started late to think about that. The other countries are also lovely, and you can travel inside this, but I do it not often.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, that is good, and what was your last destination? Why?

A3: Mmm, also a weekend?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Yes, just the last trip you did for leisure purposes, just to enjoy and to relax.

A3: Okay, that was France.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: France, okay, why did you choose France?

A3: I traveled with my family. And my family also traveled to France with us when we were children, and we looked for a big house, and it's a little bit cheaper to find houses for families in France, so we decided to go there and... yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay. that is great. And did language influence your choice when you decided to go to France?

A3: I think for my parents, yes, because they told us often, "If you are young, it's easier for you to communicate in a country." But this time, I think it wasn't the reason.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, so what you mean is that when you were a kid, they traveled to places where you could speak the language or communicate more easily.

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So were you then traveling then in Germany, or were you also going to France because you or your family speaks French?

A3: Only my dad speaks French, but he speaks very well, and so we thought that if one person can speak the language, it is enough. My brother and I learned French in school and are also trained in the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you think that it's important to speak the native language when you go to a country?

A3: No, because if you have to speak the language every time... you don't have so many options because there are many countries where you can't learn the language. But I think it is easier if you can speak the language or know some words, some phrases...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So if you had to choose between 2 destinations and one of them is speaking one language that you speak, would that be a reason for you to choose this country and not the other one?

A3: Maybe. I'm not sure. On the one hand, yes, because it's easier to be there and with Spanish and French I have two languages and some options, but there are also countries where I can't speak the language, but I think it's easier and so maybe yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the native language? Why?

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, if you can choose what you said before?

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok. And if you could go to a destination where you could communicate, would you pay more for that? For example, you choose a destination, and they say; when you go to this destination, we ensure you that you will be able to communicate. Would you pay more for that?

A3: I don't think so, because I am looking for money and don't want to pay so much. I also look for what we can see, and I think that if you are in a country... you can't speak the language, it's not every time important, you also can communicate. It's easier if you can speak the language, but it's not...; you don't have to, it's also okay, and you can communicate through similar languages... I think that helps and also with hands, so I think it's okay, and I wouldn't pay but maybe if it's a country where you don't know anything about the language, maybe... Vietnam or something like this and people in little villages can't speak languages, or another language than their own... it would be really hard to communicate because it's not similar to any language I can speak so if I were there I would feel that it doesn't work with the communication... Maybe I would decide differently if I were there and I couldn't communicate. Maybe then I would pay for it and make it easier for me and others.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, so when it's, for example, in Europe, you would not feel the necessity to do that because more or less the languages or the English level is...

A3: Or then Spanish is a little bit similar to French or Portuguese. A little bit of French a little bit of Spanish, and so, yes, they don't... They say, "I can't speak the other language," but they understand a lot, so it's enough to communicate the basics.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So even if you don't have the native language, if the people in the country can communicate, even if it's basic for you, it's okay?

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, even if you go to Poland, that is super different, you still have this feeling that okay... so you think that when they speak a bit, it's okay? So you can communicate?

A3: Yes, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you would not pay more? The only case when you would pay more and get this support is in a country where you can't communicate.

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak the native language?

A3: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and how was your experience?

A3: It was okay because most time, the other people can speak English or something like that, or in Croatia, they speak German, but I think it's not okay to go to a country and then to have the expectation that the other person can speak your language... but it works.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, is it also enough with English?

A3: English and French often, and French people don't want to speak English, but if you speak a little French, then it's enough. Then they also can switch to English or something like that. So...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you didn't speak the local language?

A3: I think not, no.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when you choose a destination, what do you consider?

A3: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, what is the list of things that comes to your mind when you choose a destination?

A3: What is important for me to decide?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Exactly

A3: This summer, for example, I would like to go to the sun, warm, nearby the sea... Some cultural background, but I am open because I don't say, "Okay, I only want to see this country" because there are a lot of places I want to travel to next time. So, yes, it was a decision with my boyfriend together because he also has some preferences. I think the language is not the point of deciding. It's more where I haven't been or which place I want to see.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most important thing for you when choosing a destination?

A3: That I can pay for it

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A3: Yes, in France, because they often don't want to speak the language or other languages, and you have to talk in French when you come to their country. Another point was in Southern America. Some people don't speak Spanish, but they don't say it... they didn't understand me and said "sorry." They wanted to help and said the wrong thing and so "go this way," but it was a completely wrong direction. If we could communicate in the same language, it would be easier, but they speak, for example, "Qechua" or something like that, that's really... it is a foreign language, so you can't be able to speak this.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did that experience change your way of thinking about traveling internationally?

A3: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, do you now have another opinion towards international traveling due to this bad experience? Or do you have the same opinion?

A3: No, It was some little situations but not bad. Things like that might happen, and it's okay, and sometimes it's like that. And if you can pay a little bit more if you don't speak the language to get help, as you said before, it's easier. But just little things, and okay, that happens, that's not important. I think.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and do you research the local language of the place before you decide to visit it?

A3: A little bit, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and does that affect your decision?

A3: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And how do you obtain this information?

A3: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How do you research which languages they speak?

A3: In Google, I think yes. And sometimes, by "ADAC", there is some information and often some vocabulary to say; "hello, goodbye, thank you" and to ask the basics. And often, it's tough to learn this, but if you can say "hello," it helps. It opens some doors, I think, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and did you have some language-related challenges when making travel plans?

A3: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, you want to go to an Asian country, and then the website is only in that language. Did you have this type of problem when planning a trip?

A3: I think until now not. But now you have, for example, the option to use google translate or something like that so you can translate. Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and in your opinion, what are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language?

A3: I think you can explore more about the culture, background, and how they live, and you can understand a little bit more. They are also more open if you can speak their language and have other impressions and better contacts.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, now I will propose two options, and then you have to tell me why you chose that country and which one you would choose.

So, for example, If you could choose between Italy and Germany, which country would you decide to visit?

A3: Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the reason for choosing that?

A3: Because the weather is better there, there is a lot of sun and a beautiful see. Yes, I think that and also a lovely landscape, so...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and between Portugal and Montenegro?

A3: Portugal because it's a dream for me to travel to Portugal because of the coast, and I like the Atlantic Sea. I don't have a connection like this to... what was the other country?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Montenegro

A3: But I don't want to say I would never go to Montenegro. Maybe it would be nice if I were there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok. Until now, the choices to choose, do you think that language has some kind of influence? Because for example, until now, you have chosen Italy and Portugal and speak Spanish.

A3: *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, do you think it could have some relation?

A3: A little bit, yes... I was in the last two years to France, and they often say, "No, we don't speak English" or "Spanish," but if I say something in Spanish, they understand what I mean. It was not nice to talk in another language, but it was the only communication option, and they understood what I said... So, it works to communicate. I think Portuguese is a little bit similar, I'm not sure, but maybe it can work, and I'm not sure if it's the reason for the decision because I am a German person, and *laughs* I speak German, so this is not the point for decision.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But for example, Montenegro, I think many people don't know anything about this country, and you don't even know the language, so maybe that makes you feel a bit...

A3: Yes, yes, I think yes. That played a role, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And if you need to... if you would have to choose between Greece and Italy?

A3: I think Greece

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the reason for your election?

A3: I was in Crete last year, and the people are open-minded and so friendly, and I like the food. I also like the Italian food. But *laughs* it was still nice, and so, yes, I would prefer Greece I think.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But when you went for the first time to Greece, how did you feel because of the language?

A3: It was a bit hard, and I'm scared... not that much... So you have it in mind that you definitely can't communicate, and some people don't speak English, so you definitely can't communicate. We asked a woman for the way, and she said, "No, no English," so she couldn't help us, but it was ok. We asked another person, so... and the woman from our hotel spoke German, which was a lot easier. There are some local tours, and the tour guides can also speak English and German because many German people *laughs* are going to Crete. But, yes, the contacts are different. If you can talk the language, you have another context, see about... a little bit more about Greek culture, and go a little bit deeper, I think. And you see a little bit more than only the tourist points. And.. then the German woman of our hotel was able to communicate in German so she could also say some points that are not that touristic so... it also helps.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and knowing that Greece has such a different language. When you had to decide to go to Greece, was it not some kind of struggle before deciding to go?

A3: No, because I wanted to see Crete or Greece because of the landscape, the people, the culture, and yes. So.. it's hard because you can't read the language. That's ... hard, and if you... we drove by bus, that was not that easy because we didn't... sometimes you can't say to which place you want to go, or we can't find the bus. But it works. So...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And the last option, Spain or San Marino?

A3: Spain *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the reason for this?

A3: I like Spain, I like Spanish food. I think food is also traveling a big factor, and I can talk the language *laughs* that helps, and... yes, I was in Spain with a family friend, and I liked it. Sometimes I would like to go to another place in Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so, for example, Montenegro and San Marino were not chosen. But Greece, for example, you choose Greece. And Montenegro and San Marino, I think that many people don't even know which language they speak but in Greece you still choose it. Is it because it's more of a tourist place and you feel it will be ok. But for example, Montenegro and San Marino...

A3: Yes, I... yes, I think so because they know that many tourists come and cannot communicate in the language ... but in other countries, I don't know something, and I don't know which language they speak or which culture they have. I think it would be exciting also to travel to these countries. But if I had to decide between these countries, I choose the other one; I am not saying that I don't want to travel to this place and sometimes it's like this when another person told about a country which is a little unknown... And then I also like to travel to places which are a little bit less tourist so that you have a little bit more culture, I little bit more of the country, not only the tourist points.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and do you have anything else you would like to add to the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A3: No *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, So nothing that you think is important or that could change the opinion of someone. So between the languages you know and the decision someone makes of a destination to travel to.

A3: Sometimes, it places a role, but that could also be about different backgrounds. If I travel with kids, I would be able to ... It is a little bit easier than if I only travel for me or with my boyfriend, it's a lot easier, and if it doesn't work okay, it doesn't work. But you must manage much more if it doesn't work with kids. You have more stress, and maybe I think that could play a role in the decision-making if you have another background or something like this.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when you go to a country where you don't speak the language, they don't speak English. Can you do it alone if you don't speak the native language?

A3: I'm not sure, but I still have never traveled alone until now. I think it's hard to be alone for this long time because I haven't had it in my life until now, but if nobody wants to travel with me or has no time or something like this... maybe I would try. But it was not the first thing I would do. If it's a big dream or I want to know something about the culture, and it's super important for me to travel to this country, I would do it nevertheless. But if I travel alone, I would choose an easier way because it's still hard.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So thank you so much for your time

A3: You are welcome

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 15/05 **Duration:** 10:55

Interviewee: A4

Location: Alicante

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A4: Of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year for leisure purposes?

A4: Not anymore.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions. What is your Gender?

A4: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age

A4: 77.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A4: In the past, it was called "Mulo," but I don't know what it's called nowadays.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so then I will have to search for it. Is it called “Mulo”

A4: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so then it is high school.

What is your country of residence?

A4: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your mother tongue/s?

A4: Dutch.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak besides from Dutch? Only to communicate so you don't have to speak, it is good to say that you can speak it.

A4: A little bit of French, English, Spanish, and German.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your English level, more or less?

A4: Well... I always had a ten at school, but now I am starting to forget it. But intermediate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So let's see, do you travel more in the country or outside the country? Think about when you used to travel.

A4: In the country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, in Spain?

A4: Yes. We always stayed in Spain and went to Spain when we were not living there yet.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason that you traveled more in Spain than in foreign countries?

A4: Because it is a beautiful country. Now I have seen so much of the world i don't need it anymore. The world becomes smaller every time, and I am happy here for my 77 years.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do you think that language was a reason to choose one country or the other?

A4: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, the languages that you know. Does that influence the destinations you choose?

A4: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, you would never travel to Asia because you don't speak Asian languages. Would that be an influence when choosing a destination? Or is it, not a problem? Or do you think that it's enough with the languages you speak?

A4: I don't feel attracted to that type of country. My boyfriend has been to all those places.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But don't think of a specific destination. If you would have to choose a destination, does language influence it? Or not?

A4: I think that you can communicate in English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it doesn't influence. Do you think that you can adequately communicate?

A4: Yes, I think so.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, if you would, for example, choose a destination, would it be a problem if you can't speak the language of the place?

A4: Yes, of course. It's a problem because I can't speak all the languages.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: For example, if you go to France or Poland. Would it be a problem due to language?

A4: Yes... of course, I can try in English which is a bit better because it is an international language but not really 100% English because I am not using it anymore. But I can understand it and speak it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that would be a reason for not going to a country, let's say, where you can't communicate adequately, for example.

A4: No, actually, I don't care that much about that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when you want to go somewhere, it doesn't matter if you can understand.

A4: No, no... It doesn't matter. There is also usually a guide.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination for leisure purposes? Why?

A4: Valencia, a city in Spain

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? Why?

A4: No, it is just because it is near and Spain is beautiful.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language people speak?

A4: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you could choose between a country where you don't understand and a country where you do understand.

A4: Yes, then I prefer to stay here. Then I can manage.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? Let's say easy.

A4: To pay more for it?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Yes.

A4: *silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, they guarantee you that you would be able to communicate when going to this destination. Would you pay more for that?

A4: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a country where you couldn't speak the native language?

A4: I haven't, but my boyfriend has. He was a sailor and has been everywhere. So then when he was, for example, in Africa, it was impossible to speak all the languages, China... he has really been everywhere. Japan, Asia...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination? What is important for you?

A4: *silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Let's say, price, location, how far it is, how expensive it is, what they speak...?

A4: I don't make any plans nowadays...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so then think of when you used to travel. What was important when you had to travel?

A4: I want to go to Holland... I would really like to go, but I don't dare, difficult... We are so old... we can't keep up with all the changes. Every time we think that we understand it the internet... then they update everything, and then we are lost again. We almost don't dare to fly. Because in the airports, you see how they wrap this luggage, and we can't keep up.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So what was important when you traveled? When you went to a destination? What did you check first?

A4: *silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: That you like it, the price, how far it was ...

A4: Price also plays a role, of course

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that's the most important?

A4: Well, the most important... I have also taken flights for 400€ but also times of 100€ if I would have been tided with time... then I was choosing the one of 100€

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

A4: That I have interest and I like the place

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A4: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: That you, for example, couldn't communicate, and there was a misunderstanding or something like that?

A4: In Spanish sometimes because I'm still not good at it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And that experience or experiences, do they have an influence on other trips? So because you have experienced that then, I don't dare to do that.

A4: That has influence, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So now, for example, you dare less because you can't speak Spanish that well for example?

A4: Yes, exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language? So you had the chance to go, but then you said, "I don't speak the language."

A4: I didn't have the chance *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, not many chances to travel?

A4: My husband was going everywhere, but I had to look after the children and work. But for some years, I'm not going anywhere anymore. To the garden... *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When you traveled, did you research a travel destination's local language and culture before deciding to visit? Or only if you liked it you went to the place?

A4: Yes! I liked to discover about the culture.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How did you usually reserve your vacations?

A4: My brother was doing it for me because he was good at it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, a person did it for you online? You didn't do it on your own?

A4: I would have no idea how to do it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So now I will introduce you to some destinations, and you have to choose which one you would... if you could go, which one would you choose Italy of Germany? What would you choose?

A4: Now you are making it difficult! I would always say Italy in the past, but now I would like to visit a relative in Germany.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So the reason you would go to Germany is not that it likes the Dutch language but because you have someone there that you know?

A4: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, then between Portugal and Montenegro?

A4: Portugal because my brother lives there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And Greece or Italy?

A4: Italy

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason?

A4: In the past, I was there really often on vacation. Many memories! I would really like it again to go back.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, then Spain or San Marino?

A4: Spain. I really like it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you think that the choices you made are influenced by language? That due to the languages you spoke, you chose the destination?

A4: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: You actually chose Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Spain. So all of them have languages that are similar to the ones that you speak. Do you think that it influences the choices you made?

A4: Actually, yes...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and why do you think that it has an influence on your choices?

A4: Because otherwise, you can't explain what you want!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it's better to go to a country where the language likes a bit to the languages you speak?

A4: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So if you can choose, you always choose something similar?

A4: Yes, something known.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Finally, do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A4: What do you mean?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you think; it is important to speak this language to go to this country, or I manage with English

A4: Yes, I really think that English is enough when necessary.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, do you think that you choose destinations according to the languages you know?

A4: I'm sure of it. Maybe not directly, but it influences.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So thank you so much for your time

A4: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 17/05 **Duration:** 10:43

Interviewee: A5

Location: Alicante

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A5: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. First of all, considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year for leisure purposes?

A5: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will ask you things about gender, age... Therefore, gender?

A5: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A5: 27.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A5: University.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Degree or Masters?

A5: Degree.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A5: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we will move on to the language knowledge section. What is your mother tongue?

A5: Spanish

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Besides from your mother tongue, do you speak any other language? Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is basic.

A5: A bit of English, yes. To communicate with the basics, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Saying that you speak English, what level do you consider you have?

A5: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which level would you say?

A5: To have basic relations, if I travel and I need to ask for something related to leisure, to get somewhere, to ask for something.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A5: Domestic.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what is the reason to travel more in the country than outside the country?

A5: I don't know, for no reason, because I don't have time, because I don't have money, and because I am not in the mood to travel, so clearly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination for leisure purposes? And Why?

A5: Outside the country?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, in general. Your last destination, which was it?

A5: I don't remember... Madrid!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? Or does it usually influence you when you travel?

A5: Yes, of course. Well... I think so because if I only speak a bit of English, I am not going far alone.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language?

A5: Yes, the truth is yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Is speaking the local language better, or do you think speaking in English is enough?

A5: Speaking English is enough, no? Well, it depends on the country you are going to because there are countries... like Spain, where people don't speak that much English...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And to avoid this language barrier, what would be necessary for you? To know the language or to travel with someone with a command of the language?

A5: The fact would be; knowing the language, but if not, traveling with someone that commands the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And traveling with someone, you would feel sure to travel to that land?

A5: Yes, yes, of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And, for example, using the phone or things like that, would that not make you feel safer?

A5: Ahh, yes, that is true! Yes, I didn't think about it, but yes, because with the phone now... now with Google translate, you can translate things.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But you wouldn't go alone?

A5: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for a vacation if they ensured you could communicate in that country or in that place?

A5: Yes... well, it depends on how much but yes, because it will also be more comfortable for me. If it's going to be stressful not to be able to communicate. Then it's not cool anymore.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A5: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And how was your experience?

A5: Well... in the case of France, I was with a person who spoke French, and when I went to Poland, I was with people who spoke English and were even living there, so they knew how to communicate well.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So... the times you have gone to a place where you didn't speak the language...

A5: I went with people, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you think it's enough English to go to a foreign country?

A5: Well.. if it's a leisure trip in which you are going to do the typical things such as going to a tourist place or to a restaurant and things like that, yes. Because I think that everyone has a minimum English level. For example, to go to a restaurant and order something or the bill or to ask for some address. Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A5: No, I haven't even had that in my mind because I don't travel much.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A5: Regarding language?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, in general, when you decide; For example, I am going to "this" destination, what is the first thing you consider to decide if that destination is the one you want or not

A5: First of all, money.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that's the most important for you?

A5: Of course, if you can afford the trip or not.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Is that the most critical factor for you?

A5: Of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And besides that, what is also essential for you when choosing a destination?

A5: That it's not too crowded. That it is not massified.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How do you usually choose your destinations? You choose them...

A5: I usually don't travel a lot. My last trip was to Madrid, which was for work, so that doesn't count. And the last time I went on a leisure trip, I went to Poland.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what do you think is the reason that you don't travel?

A5: Well... I don't think that it is because of language. From what I said, because in the end, I would not travel alone, if I travel it's with friends so in the end, what one doesn't know the other does. It is more for... what I say, for factors related to time, money with the style of life you have at that moment, and because it is not something that catches my attention. Even if it's weird because everyone likes to travel, for me, it's something I ignore. It's not something I think, "How exciting, I can't wait to travel."

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A5: No, because I haven't traveled much, and then I can't think about something.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So there wasn't any situation in which you wanted to communicate and couldn't, or was there a misunderstanding or something similar?

A5: No, no, because in the few destinations I have been to, I always went with people, and I have always felt safe because of those people. These people were living there or something like that, so... No, no, actually, no.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When you travel, what do you research about the destination, and how do you look for it?

A5: Through the internet.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so you search on websites. And which information do you look for to decide?

A5: Well... what there is in that place, the prices and the flights and how to arrive there

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you research the language they speak?

A5: No, because I always travel with someone that speaks the language or English

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? For example, if the website was in a language, you didn't understand

A5: No, I could always translate it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A5: With the language that... well, that communication is fluent, no? Because in the end, if those people are not... actually if they speak English and it's not their native language and neither mine, it will always be more difficult. If you can communicate with someone in their native language... If you can speak it, you get closer to the people.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will introduce you to options of 2 destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would choose and why.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A5: Italy

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why do you choose Italy?

A5: Let's see... one, because I feel more attracted to it, and two, because unconsciously, I know that I will be able to communicate better there. Even if I said before, that language doesn't matter. Yes, yes, Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A5: Because of the same reason, I know unconsciously that I will be able to communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

A5: Well, between Greece and Italy... I also feel attracted to Greece but pff Greek... well, between Greece and Italy... I don't know... I would maybe say Greece. Greece!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what do you think is why you choose Greece and not Italy in this case?

A5: Because... in that case, because Greece is so touristic. If I have to choose between Germany and Italy like before, I think of Italy, and I think “ok” it’s more tourist. Besides, I think I can communicate better because it is more similar to Spanish. I think Greece and Italy are ok if I feel more attracted to Greece, so in this case, the destination I know that being a tourist place, I will always be able to communicate better because people will be more prepared for tourism from other countries. Then you don’t feel it’s such a big issue and don’t think, “Maybe I will go to a place where they can’t understand me.”

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So then, if it is a tourist destination, you feel more sure to choose it even if you don’t know the language?

A5: Yes, yes. Exactly. Because the people there will be more prepared to communicate with any tourist.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But if you have to choose between a place that is not very touristic and one that is like the language of your country, then you choose the one that likes your language?

A5: Yes, Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And the last option. What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A5: San Marino, where is that?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: It’s country but within the Italian borders.

A5: Spain

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why did you choose Spain?

A5: Because I haven’t seen all of it and would like to know my country better.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and between their options, do you think that language had an influence?

A5: *fast answer* yes! Before, I said no, but actually, yes! Yes, yes! It has an influence, yes!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making? Do you think there is something else you could add or that could have an impact when choosing a destination due to languages?

A5: No, no.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: For example, people that come from a town and speak Valencian for example. Do you think that it’s more difficult for them to travel abroad?

A5: Yes,... the less knowledge you have of any language, the more difficult it is to travel abroad because you will feel more insecure. Yes, of course, yes. For example, in my case, I don’t speak that much English; I just speak Spanish, and of course, that limits you a lot more, yes, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you very much for your time.

A5: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 24/05 **Duration:** 13:23

Interviewee: A6

Location: Tenerife

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A6: Of course, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year for leisure purposes?

A6: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions.

What is your gender?

A6: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A6: 25.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A6: Advanced specific vocational training.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A6: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now, we will move on to the language knowledge section.

What is your mother tongue/s?

A6: Arab.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak besides from Arab?

A6: Spanish, Valencian, and English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Since you consider that you Speak English, which level do you consider to have?

A6: I would say intermediate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: This was regarding language knowledge. Now we will move on to the destination election.

Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A6: Domestic

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why do you travel more domestically?

A6: I have started with domestic trips for now, but I would like to travel internationally. Maybe it's related to economic reasons.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that's the first difficulty you see when traveling internationally?

A6: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination? Why?

A6: My last destination; was Tenerife due to an internship. The study, to finish my studies and for work as well.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And the last destination you visited for leisure?

A6: In Spain, domestic. I went to Jaen.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? If you know that you will be understood perfectly in your country, do you think you chose this destination partly because you can easily communicate, or did it not affect your election?

A6: It was not the main reason, but it strongly affects, the fact that they can understand me and communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Then, it impacts you when choosing a destination.

A6: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can communicate?

A6: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why do you prefer to go to a destination where you can communicate?

A6: Because I would get anxious to go, for example, to China and that they can't understand me, that I can't express myself, or that I can't order or ask for something I need. Yes, I would get anxious.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate?

A6: Would I pay more if I could communicate? Yes, if I could afford it, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: For example, they ensure you that they will give you a service with which they ensure you can communicate if you have any problem. So, would you be eager if they ensured you that you would communicate without problems?

A6: If I can afford it economically, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, the main issue for you is that you can afford it, and then you will solve the communication issue.

A6: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A6: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason that you haven't done it?

A6: The first reason; I didn't have the chance, and the second one is what we are saying. I will not go to a country if they don't speak, for example, one of those languages I speak; Spanish, English, or Arab. I would think about going or not.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But, when going, do you think it would be enough with your English level? To go to a place where you don't speak the native language?

A6: Yes, I think so.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, would you feel sure to travel to that country?

A6: If they speak in that place English, yes

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, do you think it's enough to speak English to be able to communicate?

A6: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A6: Avoided no. But If I had to choose, there are some destinations I wouldn't travel to. If they tell me that in that place they don't speak any of the languages I speak, that I will be there alone and that I will go and they will not be able to understand me, then I wouldn't go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you consider when choosing a destination? What is important for you?

A6: Safety. That it is a safe country where I will not have problems, that I can go and that I will also have fun, and that I have an interest in that country or with that culture or something specific. It is not just for merely going.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your most critical factor when choosing a destination?

A6: In my case, economy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it is the first thing you look at? And depending on the money you have or how expensive the country is, you decide from there.

A6: Exactly, it is the first thing I take into consideration, exactly. Because currently, I am not working, and then I consider the economy more.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language? A situation in which you couldn't communicate due to a language barrier?

A6: Being here in Tenerife?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, in general, in some trips, you have made or some problem you had because you wanted to say something and couldn't communicate.

A6: No, actually, no. To be honest, I never had such an experience. But because I have not been out of my... let's say, comfort zone,

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, but for example, on the trips you have done through Spain, you encountered a tourist, and you couldn't communicate with him. Did you have any bad experience with a problem of...

A6: So, with a client in a job I did, yes. A client came, he didn't speak Spanish, and I didn't speak his language, I also don't know which language it was. But we couldn't understand each other, so the client left.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so these types of experiences, do you think they could change your mind when traveling internationally? Something like, "Oh no, maybe I will have the same problem..."

A6: Exactly, that is it. Because if they don't understand what... if I am going to a place to ask for something or when I need something, and I can't express myself, then I back down if I don't know the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But if you, for example, would travel to some place knowing they don't speak English because you can. Could you go alone to that destination?

A6: *silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Knowing that you can't communicate?

A6: Pff... I would have to think about it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it would be more comfortable for you, for example, to travel with someone. So someone in the group could speak that language.

A6: Exactly, exactly. The fact of being able to communicate is a super key factor.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So for you, it is really important. Even if it's only for tourist reasons, for you to be able to communicate is essential.

A6: Yes, yes, yes!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And have you thought, for example, that we have phones nowadays? Do you feel safer, for the fact of being able to communicate? Because in the end, we have a translator, we have everything. So that makes it easier.

A6: Exactly, yes, yes! With the translator, it is like you feel safer. Because, maybe... until now, I didn't think of it, but yes. With the translator, you can indeed put what you... want, what you need, and yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But would it be enough for you, or would you feel safer if someone in your group speaks the language?

A6: Exactly, ... I would feel safer If there is someone with a good command or at least that..., it is not necessary to command, but that he can at least communicate or say what we need. Then I would feel safer, of course!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So in this case of uncommunication, it would be more useful to pay for this additional service with which you could communicate if you didn't have the phone or no one in your group can speak well...

A6: Exactly, because you might run out of battery, and then how do you speak? So then I consider paying for it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you research a travel destination's local language before choosing the destination?

A6: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what do you usually search for?

A6: Mainly, what I will visit, see, the time that... transport. Where I will have to go, first of all. And there it is, if I can not express myself or communicate, and they don't understand me in the destination I have to choose, then I wouldn't go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it is also an investigation part you do? So to look for; which languages they speak, if you will be able to communicate?

A6: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for you, it is an important part?

A6: Very important.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A6: Pff... a lot because they can tell you... it is not like visiting a tourist place where you already know what there is. If you speak with locals, they can recommend super nice places, super... Maybe people, in general, don't know it, but since they are locals, they know. They can even advise you or tell you to avoid this or that. That is the interesting part of speaking with locals.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will introduce you to options of 2 destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would choose and why.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A6: Italy

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason that you choose Italy?

A6: Because I love Italian, I love Italy, I love Italian food. So... everything goes towards Italy
laughs

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A6: Portugal because Montenegro is not familiar to me. Portugal is because it's nearer to Spain, so... it feels closer to me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

A6: *Laughs* Italy. I keep it in Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A6: Where is San Marino?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: It is a country within the borders of San Marino,

A6: So then San Marino, but only because it is in Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: San Marino doesn't belong to Italy. It is an independent country, but it is surrounded by Italy, so you will have to pass through Italy.

A6: Ok, so then, San Marino.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And these four destinations I presented to you, do you think you chose them for their similarity to Spanish? For example, You choose two times Italy, Portugal, and San Marino, and they are all languages similar to the ones you speak.

A6: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you think that there was a relation in your decision?

A6: Exactly. Not considering that I love Italy, if I had to choose Germany, it would be tough for me because of the language because I wouldn't understand anything if they are people that don't know English. Or, like Greece, I would also not understand anything, and I would not feel sure, not comfortable, and I would not enjoy my vacation as I would enjoy them if I knew the language. It is very important.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A6: I can't come up with anything.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Compared to Spanish people born in Spain, their native language is Spanish. Why do you think that your answer is so different than the one from a Spanish person?

A6: Because I have seen this language barrier in the first person. My mother, for example, someone in my family who can't speak Spanish, has a huge barrier when doing important things like paperwork or going to important appointments. Things like that are important things for which they need someone that knows the language to solve the issue, to be able to solve it without getting anxious or that they don't feel that they are being scammed. Super important things where you need the language. So obviously, language is super important when it comes to going to a place. Not only regarding tourism but also when it comes to living in a place. It is important to command the language or at least to be able to communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you very much for your time.

A6: Thanks to you.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 25/05 **Duration:** 18:35

Interviewee: A7

Location: Valencia

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A7: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A7: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, we are going to answer some socio-demographic questions. Therefore, could you tell me your gender?

A7: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A7: 31.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A7: Master.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A7: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we will move on to the language knowledge section. What is your mother tongue/s?

A7: Arab.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak? Saying that you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is essential.

A7: Spanish, English, French, and Valencian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you stated that you can speak English, what is your level?

A7: Intermediate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: This was regarding language knowledge. Now we will move on to the destination election.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A7: International.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And why do you travel more internationally?

A7: I always have time to do it when I am older, so now I want to go to further countries since I am young and don't mind waiting in airports or flying long distances.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination? Why?

A7: Tenerife to visit my sister and see my friend because I was traveling with her.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? Why?

A7: No, because it was to visit my sister, but I feel calmer knowing it is in Spain and I can speak Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language? Why?

A7: Not necessarily. I think I can manage with the languages I know or go with someone that knows the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? Why?

A7: If I could communicate and learn more about the country and culture.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak the native language?

A7: Yes, and I could manage with the languages I know because there are many similar languages in Europe, and many people speak English. When I was out of Europe, I went to arab speaking countries, so it was also not a problem.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A7: It was great; I tried different foods, met people, and saw beautiful places.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Was it enough with English?

A7: Yes, and if not, someone can help me translate, and locals are usually kind and positive.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A7: No, I don't see it as a barrier, but maybe it is because I have done an Erasmus, and that opens your mind a lot. Before my Erasmus, I was different; even If I knew languages, I was not traveling that much. During my Erasmus, I felt I could do everything alone and get the things I wanted, even if I didn't speak the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Where did you do your Erasmus?

A7: In Italy, even if I didn't speak Italian, I could manage because it is similar to Spanish, making me see that I could communicate. During my Erasmus, I also traveled a lot, I went to Prague, which has a different language but could manage with English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you consider when choosing a destination?

A7: Gastronomy, landscape, beaches...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your most critical factor when choosing a destination?

A7: Landscape because I want to see something that I like. When I like something, I don't care about seeing it more times. I mean going back to the destination. For example, I go to Italy every time I can because I love it and also to the same cities. I never get tired of it. And food, for me it's one of the most important things I love to eat!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A7: No, not that I remember.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you research a travel destination's local language and the language they speak before deciding to visit?

A7: Yes, in the beginning, I was taking a lot of time to do it; I was planning everything, what to do and what to see; I was organizing it by days, making a schedule, I was taking some itinerary with me to know what to do, where to it... but now I don't plan it anymore because I have started to work and I don't have time anymore and doing it like that I also realized that it is not necessary to plan everything, you can also have a nice experience by just going and discovering.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do you research about the language they speak?

A7: Usually, more or less, I know which languages they speak, and If I don't know anything, then I search for which language they speak. But as I said, outside of Europe, I traveled to Arabic countries, and for the moment, due to the economy and time, I am just traveling in Europe, and here, more or less, everyone can communicate a bit in English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How does the obtained information affect your decision?

A7: I can decide if I go or not if I am interested in seeing things.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? What type?

A7: Yes, if I can't search for information in the language, it's a barrier because I don't understand what I am reading or what type of destination it is. Some pages of the destination are only in their language, and when you translate it, the translation is often not good so if I feel that I am not understanding, I don't feel safe and discard the option.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A7: There are many advantages, and you can get to know the locals, see different things, ask for advice about where to go...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you could choose between Italy and Germany, what would you choose?

A7: Italy. I know it, and I have been there before; it is more similar to what I am used to. I like the food, the people.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro, what would you choose?

A7: I don't know anything about Montenegro, so I would choose Portugal because it is near, and I know I can communicate. I have also seen the pictures of lovely places to see and heard excellent things about Portugal.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Greece?

A7: Every time I am increasingly interested in Greece because of the landscape and new places to visit, I know Italy already.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Can it be that you take the chance because it is a touristic place? Then you know that people will be prepared to communicate in English even if they speak Greek?

A7: Actually, even if I don't know the native language, I can communicate in one of the languages I know, and I think it is worth visiting the places I have never been to. Nevertheless, it is true that being a tourist place it gives me the calmness that they are prepared for tourists and, therefore, can communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A7: I have no idea about San Marino, what it is, or if it even exists *laughs*, but it makes me more curious, and I want to discover it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And not knowing anything about this country, doesn't it scare you that you will not be able to communicate or have some problems?

A7: I should indeed investigate to know more about San Marino because I don't know anything, but I feel attracted to new places, and with the languages I know, I think I can manage in most of European countries.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So 50% of your answers were to countries where you can easily communicate. You chose Italy and Portugal. Do you think there is a relationship?

A7: It could be that the factor of language, in this case, plays a role and that we might sometimes choose a destination because it will make communication easier. Also, at least in my case, Italy means a lot, and therefore going there feels like going home, and I feel comfortable going. It can be that it relates to language unconsciously, but I'm not afraid of being unable to communicate. But, sincerely, I would like to go to Portugal because I have never been there before, but at least to Italy; I try to go once per year for sure. Because of language, culture, food, and everything ...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A7: Yes, I think there is a relationship because you feel safer. Safety is essential for me, and I feel safer at the destination if I can communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Is it enough if one person in your group speaks the language?

A7: In company, but I could also go alone because I have also been to Switzerland and I managed.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In Switzerland, for example, they speak French. Do you think that this had an impact on choosing to go there alone?

A7: Yes, it was because I speak quite good French; therefore, on one side, it was because of the language, which makes it easier to speak French. Usually, French-speaking people are not eager to speak other languages. Then being there, I fell in love with the country, and from now on, I would always choose to go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you go to a place where you don't speak the language?

A7: Yes, I would go. If you told me to go to Japan, for example, I would go. I think that language, at one point, will be learned. Imagine a language I don't know anything about... and if it's a country where you can communicate in English or any other language a person speaks, has a certain level of knowledge... From my point of view, I would go for sure because the experience of being in another place and getting to know the culture, the people, to see how others live, to learn... it is really interesting and therefore, language... it depends on the country you are going to choose. It depends on what you want; language is important or not. If my goal is to work, then I should have an intermediate command of the language, but if it is to live an experience or you have to there six months on an exchange or Erasmus... I would not consider language that much. If I only have choices of countries of which I don't speak the language... I would accept it and go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But to a country where you don't know anything about?

A7: I would go anyway to discover it, like in the case of San Marino.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you so much for your time!

A7: You are welcome!

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer
Interviewee: A8

Date: 26/05 **Duration:** 9:58
Location: Valencia

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A8: Yes, I do.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A8: I try to do, but I can say; yes. I travel at least once a year.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions. Can you please tell me your gender?

A8: I am a Male.

What is your age?

A8: I'm 58.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A8: I am trying to get a university degree. But until now, I am only a bachelor.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, perfect, and In which country do you live?

A8: I live in Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your mother tongue/s?

A8: Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak?

A8: Well, I'm lucky because despite being Spanish, I can speak fluent English, and I got some knowledge of French, German, and Dutch also.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is essential. So, would you add any other languages?

A8: Let's say that... if we are talking about understanding or communicating with each other, I would also include Italian in that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, thank you. And If you stated that you can speak English, what is your level?

A8: I am proud to say that I have a certified C1 level.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, now we are moving on to the destination election. Do you travel more domestically or internationally?

Domestic is in your country, International outside the country

A8: I would say that I prefer to travel outside the country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason for doing that?

A8: Well, because I'm 58, and I love it, and I know my country quite well. And I think it is quite interesting to see some other places apart from my own country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, what was your last destination? And Why?

A8: Ohh, let me think about that. I think it was to the Netherlands but it was not a real leisure trip, I think it was a work trip.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and the last leisure trip you remember?

A8: I think I went to France 2 or 3 months ago.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and what was the reason for going to France?

A8: Well, it's a close country, and I like the culture and many things from France itself. So I think it was a good decision to go. It's close and nice.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do you think that language influenced your choice to go to this country?

A8: Well, actually, it's a bit funny because French people usually prefer that everybody is speaking in French. But because I speak a little bit of French, it was not a special issue, so for me, it was not a problem.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But if you didn't know French, would that suppose a hardship to go to this country? Or a barrier

A8: I think so, because as I believe French people are very protective of their language so they want you to speak it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, but do you have this situation only in France, or do you also have it in a different country where you can't speak the language?

A8: Well, slightly in France but in other places... People I found... are keen to help you to communicate despite you are speaking their language or not.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language?

A8: That would be lovely, but it means that I should learn more languages to do that. But yes!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you would prefer it, but it's not inconvenient for you if you don't speak the native language of the country?

A8: That would be the proper answer. I prefer it but wouldn't be inconvenient.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? If someone assures you; we will give you this tool or service, and you will be able to communicate in this place

A8: I don't think so, because part of traveling is discovering new people even if you don't understand what they say so for me it would not be an incentive to have a cheaper price despite they are speaking your language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, If you would pay extra for having a service that helps you to communicate with people.

A8: Not at all. I am one of those persons that prefer to discover it myself.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A8: Yes, I think so.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A8: Well, years ago, I went to Morocco. I don't speak Arab for sure, and anyway, I found that the people were very friendly, trying to talk a few words in any other language. So despite I was not speaking the local language for me, it was not a problem to be there for a couple of weeks.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, do you think that it's enough with the skills you have? For example, you speak French, English...

A8: Yes, I think so, and people down there are quite flexible, and they understand that nobody is speaking their local language. So, they are very open even to talk a few words in another language, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A8: I don't think so. In fact, it is really attractive or exotic to go to a place where you have no idea what people are talking about.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A8: Well... that is a good question; maybe safety is a good reason. You have to go to places where you feel safe; distance and price are also something to consider. But based on that I think you have to give it a chance to explore places where you have never been, or they are far away or whatever so, you have to try.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination for you?

A8: Price or economics is a critical factor. I think that would be the basic one.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language? Because there was a language barrier?

A8: Not at all; as I am telling you, I am trying to be open-minded, and despite and on top of the local language, I think that humans have quite a lot of ways to communicate apart from talking.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when planning where to go, do you research the place you are going to?

A8: Yes, nowadays it's so easy just to go to the internet and check the conditions, the prices, the communication, the culture. I think that everybody should do that for sure.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what are the factors you search about? What do you want to know about the country you are going to?

A8: That's a good question. I think I like...I like to check what are the prices of things there. Just to plan or make a budget for the trip. I also like to see what is interesting to see or to visit, just to make a little plan to spend my time there as much profit as possible. And basically, those are the two factors, the cost and the things to do down or up there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when it comes to deciding between two destinations, what is the factor that makes you choose for one and not for the other?

A8: I think that I would prefer the one where I haven't been before.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when you search about this destination you are going to, how does the information you obtain affect your decision?

A8: I think quite a lot because now you can access so many web pages and places where people tell what they think. So you are not taking information from a single place; if you are clever, you are getting information from different sources to make a final decision.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when researching or planning a trip, did you ever have language-related challenges? For example that the website was in a language you did not know or that you couldn't translate it.

A8: Not at all, because also nowadays you can so easily translate the contents of any website; I mean that even if they are making it only in the other language, you can have it easily translated, let's say. But as I am saying, the most important thing is to get information from different sources. Just to get a whole idea.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language?

A8: Quite a lot, so that's also a way of getting integrated into knowing about their traditions, food, and habits. If you are so lucky to speak the language of the place you are visiting, you have got a big advantage.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will propose two destinations, and every time you choose one, you need to tell me why.

If you could choose between Italy and Germany, what would you choose?

A8: I think I would like to go to Germany because Italy, I know it, let me call it quite well, and not Germany, so that is why I would prefer to go there. Just to go deeper into the knowledge of that country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and between Portugal and Montenegro.

A8: Well, that is a good question because Portugal is very close to us, to Spain, and I have never been there. And Montenegro, for me, sounds quite exotic, but I think I should give it a chance to Portugal first because it is much closer.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and between Greece and Italy?

A8: I would choose Greece because I have never been to Greece and often to Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and the last one, between Spain and San Marino?

A8: Well, I know that San Marino is a tiny country, but it also looks quite interesting, and because I am always in Spain, I think I would go to San Marino.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, great, and do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A8: I think that everything is up to the person because some people are very affected by the fact that they are not understanding or speak the language of the country they are visiting. Still, I think you have to be more open-minded and give it the chance to go there despite you are not able to communicate. If your attitude is right and you behave properly, people will help you handle things.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In this case, you would go to a country where you don't know the language, and you are not able to communicate because they also don't speak English. Would it be enough for you that there is a person in your group that speaks the language?

A8: Yes, more than enough. I mean, for sure, I would need that person for some specific thing but..., but basically, for the basic things of eating or taking a public bus or whatever, I think that every one of us with the right attitude is able to do that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And could you also do that alone without anyone else?

A8: I would give it a try, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so thank you so much for your time.

A8: You are very welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 27/05 **Duration:** 15:21

Interviewee: A9

Location: Valencia

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A9: Yes, I agree.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A9: Yes, I do.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions. What is your gender?

A9: Female.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A9: 27.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A9: I have a bachelor's degree, University degree.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A9: I live in Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your Nationality?

A9: I am British.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Perfect, thank you.

Now we will move on to the language knowledge section.

Could you please tell me which is your mother tongue?

A9: English.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which other languages do you speak?

A9: I speak Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is basic. Would you add any other language?

A9: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, which level of Spanish do you think you have?

A9: I have a C1 certificate. I work in Spanish, and I live life in Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so then, advanced?

A9: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A9: Ok, and in my country, is it in Spain? Because I moved here two years ago and before I was living in England.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When you live here, yes.

A9: I would say... that is difficult because... I think in Spain, like I do day trips and things, there are nice places to visit nearby, but as I have a lot of family abroad, maybe I would say abroad. I go back to London probably more than I travel to Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so the reason that you travel more internationally is that you go to visit some people

A9: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, not for leisure travel?

A9: Oh, no. I travel for leisure more in Spain than I do abroad.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And when you were living in England, were you doing that more in the country or abroad?

A9: More abroad.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what was the reason for doing that?

A9: Because I think people in England, when they travel for leisure, want sunshine and they maybe want beaches. Ah, and that is easier to find abroad *laughs* than it is at home.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last leisure travel destination? Why?

A9: I was just in France, but it was a wedding. My sister's wedding, I don't know if that counts.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and another leisure travel destination that you remember?

A9: Maybe my boyfriend can help me. The last leisure travel, the last trip we did for fun. We went to PortAventura!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So that was in the country.

A9: That was in the country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? How?/Why?

A9: In this case, no, because we live here, and they speak Spanish here. No, I didn't think about language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, but when it comes to deciding a destination, do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language?

A9: No. No, I don't think about language too much.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, imagine the case you go to a country in which you don't speak any of the languages you speak. Would that be a problem for you?

A9: No, I think I would find it interesting. Maybe I would be a bit more intimidated, and I would try to prepare a little bit. But it's hard; being English, I have rarely gone to a place where they didn't speak, where I knew that I couldn't speak English with someone.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you knew you could communicate? Why?

A9: That's a really hard question. Would I pay more? *long break* If I think about, for example, where I know they don't speak any English and it might be difficult for me to get around, I would probably pay more to have someone there with me who could speak to people and translate for me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak the native language?

A9: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And how was your experience?

A9: I liked the experience. I think it's interesting to listen to other people speak and I think it's a fun challenge as well. Yes, I liked the experience.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and when you were on the point of deciding to go to the destination, did you see some influence of the language because you knew that you were not speaking with the natives

A9: I think it is a factor that you... do consider. I have, on occasion... I have gone to a place that I don't know and maybe bought a little book with helpful phrases and things like that. So yes, I do consider it. But I don't think it is something that would ahm stop me from visiting a place.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, so you think that when traveling, it's enough with English?

A9: Yes, I do think it's enough, and Spanish is obviously very helpful as well.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the language?

A9: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What factors do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A9: I think I would think about the money. I would think about the... what sort of holiday is whether it's like a beach holiday or a city holiday. What else would I think about? I'm not sure.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, it is fine.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

A9: I think probably things that I could do there, activities or maybe sort of like landscape or things like that.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A9: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when traveling that you couldn't communicate or there was a misunderstanding or something like that?

A9: I actually think I didn't *laughs*. There have been a lot of misunderstandings and I have had moments where I haven't been able to communicate. But it's always been kind of a sort of positive and funny experience rather than a negative one.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay. So that doesn't change your opinion towards discovering new places?

A9: No, no, I definitely see it as a positive thing; I think in some ways I kind of like the idea more of going to a place where they're not a lot of people speaking in English; it feels like I'm really experiencing a new culture

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and usually when you are planning to make a trip or to choose a destination, do you research the locals they speak in the country before making the decision?

A9: No, not really. no, I... I said yeah, on occasion, I've bought myself a helpful phrase book, but that's as far as my research has ever gone

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, but usually when you go to a place, you have the feeling that it is enough with English. So you are not; okay, do they speak English or...?

A9: I think... Exactly I think I've always been very lucky that I know there's always probably going to be someone that understands me.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? For example, you go into a website of a country that speaks another language, and everything is in that language, and you can't understand it.

A9: Yes. I have had that, particularly with websites and things like that and food menus, for example.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and did change your decision? Because when you don't understand what you are choosing.

A9: Yes, I think that's hard; I think day-to-day things are hard... I think they're probably a lot of obstacles like I don't know if... I've never had this experience, but if I was driving abroad and I couldn't read road signs, or I couldn't read things like that, yeah, that would be very difficult. But I haven't had a lot of difficult experiences so far.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, so now I will ask you the last question regarding this topic. So, according to you, What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A9: I think the advantage is probably that you might... you might find common ground. People might be more likely to help you if they think you're making an effort with their language. I think the obvious benefit is if they don't speak English, then that might be the only way of communicating with them. But I think it's a nice way as well of just sort of embracing a different culture and being respectful to another culture and people is; making an effort with their language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will propose to you some options of destinations, and you have to choose one and tell me why choose it.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A9: I would choose Italy.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and what is the reason?

A9: Because I really like Italian food and I am more interested in the Italian climate, and I like Italian I'm trying to learn Italian, so I think it would be a good opportunity to practice.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A9: I would choose Montenegro purely from a conversation that I had today with someone that told me amazing things about Montenegro. It sounds like...I like that it's small and that you can get probably to know the place well. And it sounds like people are very friendly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

A9: If I had to choose today, I would choose Greece. Because it's a place, I think. I am less likely or less likely to visit in the future. I think it's probably Italy... is far more accessible to me so I think, Greece I would choose Greece.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A9: Okay, I'm gonna sound really dumb, but I don't know where San Marino is... I'm so sorry...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: It's in Italy; it's an independent country, but it's surrounded by Italy. So if you go there, you have to go through Italy.

A9: *long break* Ok, I know very little about San Marino, but maybe if I choose today, I would go there because, again, it's a place that I'm not I'm less likely to go to normal, and I've never been before, so...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making? Something that you think might be important or...

A9: I don't know, I think it's a very complex question, and I think it's very subjective. Everyone is different, and people have... different attitudes toward traveling to other countries and speaking another language... And I think it probably like also goes...It is somewhat related economically, for example. I have... I feel like my parents were well off, so they took us as kids on holiday, and I... I don't know. I think it's different when you're if you've grown up traveling around and meeting new people and things like that. Then it doesn't seem as intimidating if you speak to a 40-year-old who's never left their country. I think... the idea to that person to go to a country where they don't speak his language... is far scarier than it would be to someone like me, for example.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And with the language skills you have right now, you could go wherever, even if you don't speak the language, alone.

A9: Ahh.. that's different. I would be... I would be open to going anywhere alone, I think so, but that probably also depends on, maybe, the political stability of the country, I think. That is more of a concern for me than the languages.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, in the case you would be going alone, it would not make any difference if there is a person in your group that speaks the language, for example?

A9: So, I choose either to go with someone? Okay, yeah, I would go with someone, but maybe there are two factors to that if it's someone who speaks the language and someone who is also from the place. Because I think I would love to visit a country that I have never been to with someone from there because I think I would have a more authentic, real experience than to go alone, yeah.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So actually, when you go to a place, you focus more on what you can see, what the country can bring to you. You are not thinking; maybe I would have this problem... because I can't communicate or... so that is not a problem for you?

A9: I don't worry about communication as much; no, I don't think about it too much

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you so much.

A9: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 04/06 **Duration:** 12:41

Interviewee: A10

Location: Stuttgart

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions. Could you tell me your gender?

A10: Female

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A10: 27 years.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A10: Advanced specific vocational training; I got the certificate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you did until high school, and then you did this, which is like a practical study?

A10: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A10: Germany.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we will move on to the language knowledge section.

What is your mother tongue/s?

A10: Italian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak? Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is basic.

A10: German, English, French, and a bit of Spanish.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your level if you say you can speak English?

A10: B2.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, then intermediate, intermediate-advanced?

A10: Intermediate-advanced.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In the next section, we will dig into the destination election

Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A10: *silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Considering that you live in Germany.

A10: I think internationally.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason for this decision to travel more internationally?

A10: To discover new places.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination for leisure purposes? Why?

A10: Let me think, Strasbourg, because it was a birthday present.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice to go there?

A10: Let's say that knowing the language makes the trip easier.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, when you travel, do you think that language has an impact on the decision you make?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, when you go to a place, you see which language they speak, and your decision might change if you don't?

A10: If I had difficulties communicating, I would choose a different destination.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But with the languages you currently speak. For example, English is spoken everywhere. Do you consider your English level enough for a place where you don't speak the native language?

A10: It depends on the place. Because there are also places in which English is not that much spoken.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it would also be a factor that those living there don't speak English.

A10: Exactly, it depends not only on me but also on where I go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for you, it would be an obstacle to go to that place?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language?

A10: *Long break* Do I prefer? Yes, it would make the trip easier.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for example, if you go to a place where you can speak the native language, would you prefer this place to go to another?

A10: *long break* oh my god... it is difficult because that would force me to stay in the country, but if I want to see a place, I would rather make an effort with another language to be able to go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, imagine that there is a country, for example, in Africa, and there is a country from which you don't speak the language and another that speaks, for example, French.

A10: So then, yes, I would go to the country where I know they speak French.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate? Why?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So they ensure that there is, for example, a service "We help you if there is any problem or if you want to communicate. So you would be eager to pay more?

A10: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A10: Difficult. We went to Greece, where we couldn't speak the language, and we couldn't even read it because it was impossible to understand it. After all, they have another alphabet. So it becomes difficult to communicate or to understand, for example, in a supermarket, the basic things, what you want, what you are buying or what you want to do.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did this experience change the way to see the languages in which you can't understand

A10: Yes, because it makes you realize it is important to know an official language spoken everywhere.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But with the languages you speak, was it enough to be there?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Was it enough with English?

A10: Yes, luckily, English is spoken everywhere.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A10: No, I don't think so. It influences my choice, but it would not influence me ultimately not to go.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So there are other things that you consider. For example, What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A10: First of all, what there is to see in the place, if it's near or far, the price of course, how much it would cost, the convenience of arrival and then the language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your most critical factor when choosing one destination and not another?

A10: Actually, how to get to a place. If you can go by plane, by car, by bus. How much would the trip last, and how much would the ticket be? This is, for me, the most decisive factor.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of not knowing the language or having a communication problem?

A10: *long silence* no, I don't think so.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So there has never been a problem because you couldn't communicate or they didn't understand you?

A10: Actually, on the first trip I made to London, I couldn't speak English that well, and then I was scared to communicate. But simply because of a lack of trust in myself. So I tried to avoid speaking and to let the others speak more. But it would not be like that if I had to go now.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So this "bad experience" didn't change your way of seeing trips abroad or where you can't speak.

A10: No, on the contrary. It was a motivation to learn more.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When you decide to make a trip, do you research the destination?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what do you usually research?

A10: What to see, which are the most touristic zones, where I can stay, what to eat.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you also research the language they speak?

A10: If I am not sure about the language, then yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, usually, you know, but if not, in the case you check it?

A10: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How does the obtained information on the research affect your decision?

A10: *Long silence* It makes it easier or... yes, it makes it easier if I know the language, and If I don't know the language, I will make myself prepare myself before departing.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you would prepare yourself, but you would go anyway?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? For example, a website that was only in a language that you couldn't speak, and then you wondered, "How should I understand this"?

A10: Yes, some websites are only in the native language, and then maybe you cannot translate every word, and then you use google maps... oh, sorry, I mean google translate or another translator.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you have had this problem. And did that make you think once; it is difficult, so I am not going to that place?

A10: Maybe thinking not to go not, but yes, it affects me a bit.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A10: It is also a sympathy factor. I mean, making people of the country feel comfortable. So not doing... I mean not being the typical tourist but also a person that appreciates the place.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will introduce you to options of 2 destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would choose and why.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A10: Because it is my country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So precisely because of that, for going to your country?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A10: Because of food and the coast.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what would be the reason?

A10: Because..., let's see, if you consider places, it's much more... it's different than Italy. So for something new to discover.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?
Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what would be the reason?

A10: Food *laughs* and good weather.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So then, between the choices you have made, in the end, you choose; Italy, Portugal, Greece, and Spain. Accordingly, 3 of 4 countries have languages that are similar or are the ones that you speak. Do you think that there has been a connection?

A10: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: That you have chosen these destinations because...

A10: Maybe yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Languages are alike. In the end, between Greece and Italy, you thought; ok, they are both Mediterranean countries; you have already been to Greece, so then you said; let's go. But in the others, for example, Montenegro, probably it's unknown which language they speak, San Marino, not so much information about it. So then, do you think that there was some kind of relationship?

A10: Yes, maybe yes. Yes, yes, I think that it influences the choice. Maybe not directly, but in unconsciously, yes. It is a matter of safety.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A10: No, thank you.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And if you would have to go to a place you don't know anything about, you don't speak the language, or they can't understand you. Would you be able to go alone?

A10: *long break* I could, but it would not be a trip that I would enjoy 100%.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it would be something that you would do being forced, but it would not be something you would choose to do?

A10: Exactly. Let's say that I would not feel completely comfortable knowing that I would have problems communicating.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And if you go with more people, at least one person in this group speaks this language and can communicate. Would that be enough for you?

A10: It would be much easier, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you would decide to go to this place?

A10: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you very much for your time.

A10: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 4/06 **Duration:** 19:41

Interviewee: A11

Location: Villingen-Schwenningen

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A11: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A11: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First of all, I will ask some socio-demographic questions.

What is your gender?

A11: Male.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your age?

A11: 26.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A11: Master.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A11: Germany.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we are moving on to the language knowledge section.

What is your mother tongue/s?

A11: German.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak? Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is basic.

A11: English and a little bit of Spanish. Do you need the level?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your level if you stated that you can speak English?

A11: B2.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So intermediate or intermediate-advanced?

A11: Intermediate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: The next section is destination election.

Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic is in your country and international to a foreign country.

A11: International.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason for traveling more internationally?

A11: Because I want to see also other countries and other nature and other landscapes. So, I can do the stuff here in Germany whenever I want. Also, on a weekend and when I'm going to travel, I'm going for longer distances.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination for leisure purposes?

A11: The last destination was Innsbruck in Austria. For vacation, I went there with my girlfriend to see the city and also the nature around and to hike and walk there a bit.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But what was the reason that you chose Innsbruck?

A11: I was there some years ago, but I knew that it's a nice city. But I was small, and I went for the last time with my parents. So I wanted to see it again and because I also know some nice places there but I didn't remember all of the city, so I went with my girlfriend to also show her the city.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did language influence your choice? How?/Why?

A11: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So there was no relation in that in Austria, they speak German? And you are also German?

A11: Of course, it's easier when you speak the language, but I think that they might speak another language, and I can communicate in English there... For me, nowadays it's not a problem anymore.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language? Why?

A11: What do you mean by language? All languages I speak or my national language?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when you go to a country where you can speak the language, they speak the local language.

A11: Of course, I want to communicate with the people there. But if I'm able to speak with them in English, I'm also choosing that destination for my vacation.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, if you could choose between two destinations, would you choose the one where you know you can communicate?

A11: Yes, of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate?

A11: Yeah, I think it's more difficult even if it's cheaper to travel in countries where I don't speak the language, or people cannot communicate with you. Today when you can also use your phone and translate stuff with apps, it's easier than it was in the past, but for me, communication is a big thing, so I would spend more money.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, so, for example, you get the service in which they assure you that you will be able to communicate. They will assist you if you have a problem. So, would you pay more for that?

A11: Yes, I think so.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A11: Yes of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A11: In some situations a bit difficult, but I would say that was never a big problem that we or I couldn't solve. So it was fine, but of course, it's better if you can directly ask something or when you have problems that you can solve with the people around you.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and how was the process of choosing to go to the destination?

A11: Most of the time, I love to travel to new countries or new places I was never before. So, most of the time, that is the reason for choosing maybe also a country where I cannot communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And in these countries, was it enough with English to communicate?

A11: Yeah, most of the time, yes. When you are in bigger cities or capital cities, there are a lot of people there that speak English. But around the big cities in nature, it's a bit more problematic, but I would say I never had a situation where a big problem came because of language.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But for example, if you would take a vacation to a place that is not in a big city, would that be a problem for you?

A11: As I said, I think nowadays, with mobile phones..., it's easier

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A11: In the past, yes, but after my internship abroad and after speaking more English, not anymore.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, since you improved your skills, you will no longer do it?

A11: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A11: As I said ... if I was there before or is it a new country or place for me...that is a... that is a thing. Then, also the weather, also as we said the language but not it's not a that big thing, ... and the interests, also most of the time, I'm not traveling alone so I'm not going to decide alone. So yeah, I am discussing that with my girlfriend or with friends so yeah.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the most critical factor for you when choosing a destination?

A11: Pfff... can I only answer one thing?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Yes.

A11: *long silence* that's difficult.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So what is the most important for you when you're traveling?

A11: *long silence* I think the relation of distance and time I have to travel.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A11: Yes...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And what was it?

A11: It was not something normal. When I was in Denmark, I had a situation with a stranger, he had some problems, mental problems he heard me and a friend speaking English, and after he heard that we were not speaking the native language so Danish, he was freaking out and throwing a stone. But that was not really related to... or yeah, okay, it was... it was related to the factor language, I think.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And did that experience change your point of view regarding other countries or destinations?

A11: No, because I heard from the police that this guy has mental problems. So I could, yeah... I could already know that this is not normal, so that had nothing to do with language or with the country or with the culture or people who are living there.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you research the destination's local language? and the language they speak before deciding to visit?

A11: Sorry, what?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when you're on the point of deciding a destination, do you research which language they speak and what is the local language?

A11: Yeah, most of the time when I'm thinking about the country, I already know what language they are... they speak. But, I think I was never searching for how good they are speaking English because when you are speaking with friends or family, they already know something about the country and say maybe, "okay, in the South of Europe, they are not that good in English", and you know that it's maybe a bit more complicated to communicate. Still, I was never really searching for what language they speak in the country.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, when you obtain information from friends, family, or any source, how does the obtained information affect your decision?

A11: Yeah, of course; if I hear that, maybe I'm... I want to go to Mexico City, and a friend was there and had a bad situation or something like that, then I'm overthinking if I really want to go to this to this place. But, most of the time you need to... to see the city or the place or country by yourself and so... Of course, you know sometimes those areas are more dangerous than others so you think if you really want to be in that area but... yeah.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? So for example, you wanted to search about a destination or make some reservation, and the website was only in a language you didn't understand, and then you were not able to...

A11: Pff, that is a good question. *long break* I don't think that I had an experience like that... That I was on a website.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: On a website or also on a phone, you can call, some language barrier while deciding on going to a destination.

A11: Right now, at that moment, I cannot remember a situation like that. I only can remember that I rented a bike in Ljubljana, and then they said like; yeah, for three years per year, you can get or rent bikes, and this year I got an email that this one year abo... abonnement is continuing, and I wanted to... not to delete but... what is the English word? To quit it, and I couldn't because the website was only in Slovenian

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And do these types of situations change your point of view toward the language barrier...?

A11: No, I think I'm too open-minded to have one situation, and then I'm thinking; okay, that was so difficult or so bad that I'm never doing that again.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language while traveling?

A11: I think if you can communicate with... locals, they are... I sometimes had the feeling... if they know that you are speaking their language, they are nicer to you, and they are more open-minded and they are telling you everything, and you're learning quite more from their culture than if you would speak with them or communicate with them in English or another language. So, I think it's like a privilege, privilege? Privilege! if you know the native language... because then it's also nicer to... to explore the... the country and people in the culture and everything

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will propose you two destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would choose and why.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A11: Because I'm from Germany, I would choose Italy. Because it's... in the summer with the sea and less rain, and warmer or it's warmer there, yeah and yeah.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A11: *long break* that is more difficult. I would say I'm choosing Montenegro because i was already in Portugal, and as I said, I love to... to see new places and new countries and new cultures. So, I would go to Montenegro.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

A11: Pff, before I said Italy, so then I'm going now with Greece. Greece is a nice country with all the islands. I was there last year and am also going for a summer vacation this year. Because, yeah, it's nice to travel there, and people are most of the time super open-minded, and yeah, I love it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A11: Yeah, I would say San Marino is too small for a big vacation so I'm choosing Spain. I would say if I'm in Italy and then I'm going to San Marino for maybe one day or two days and that's enough, but if I'm choosing for Vacation, then I would choose Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay, and these choices you made. Do you think that language influenced these choices you made? Because I know that you have some Spanish skills and you chose Italy, Spain...

A11: Yes... Yeah, I don't think. Of course, between San Marino and Spain, maybe because I'm speaking or understanding a bit of Spanish. But as I said, I was not directly thinking about languages. Of course, maybe in your head, but not directly, it's related to languages. But I would say that I'm going for interest, so like; I want to see Spain, and I said... as I said San Marino is super small, so then I'm going with Spain. Or Italy and Germany... I also could say I am going to Germany because I know the language or I'm speaking the language, but yeah...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making? About one thing impacting the other?

A11: What does this language exactly mean?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So when you know for example a language at the moment of deciding to go to one place or another, do you have anything to say like about how it impacts people or on you or...

A11: Pff... Yeah, of course, as I said before. When I think about the country, and I know that I can communicate with people, it's even nicer than only booking it... and knowing it could be difficult to communicate or to ask for stuff or whatever so... it has an impact but not the highest of the of making the decision for ...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But for example, if you have to destinations and you can choose between one where you know that you can communicate in and one that you have no idea or will have problems which would you choose?

A11: Yeah, of course, the easier way. The country where I can communicate.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Even if it's for leisure travel?

A11: *really long silence* yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And then if you go to a country where you know that you can't communicate because you don't speak the language, and they also don't speak English or some of the common languages with you? Could you go alone to this place?

A11: Alone, I don't know, maybe then I'm a bit afraid of feeling lonely or that I'm not in... in the wrong... not in the right country, but I think with my couple or in groups maybe I'm feeling them a bit calmer that we find the way to manage all the things.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok so if there is one person in your traveling group that speaks the language, then you would be fine with it?

A11: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And if no one in this group speaks... would you also feel fine with it?

A11: No, as I said.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Okay so then if no one speaks, then you would not be comfortable to go to this place.

A11: I think I would not choose a country or destination when I know before that it could be difficult to communicate there or... to feel relaxed or feel like it's a vacation when I have time problems... to communicate or to find stuff in the supermarket or to... read the signs and all the things on the street so yeah.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you so much for your time.

A11: You are welcome.

Interviewer: Kimberly Maté Kramer

Date: 06/06 **Duration:** 20:04

Interviewee: A12

Location: Google Meets

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Hello, my name is Kimberly Maté Kramer, and I am a Master's student from the EMTM (European Master in Tourism Management). I am writing my Master's thesis, which explores the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decisions. Therefore, I am going to record this conversation for research purposes. Do you agree?

A12: Correct, okay.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you for taking the time to answer this anonymous survey. Considering that "leisure travel" is a trip for relaxation and enjoyment. Do you travel at least once per year?

A12: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: First, I will ask some socio-demographic questions.

What is your gender?

A12: Male.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, What is your age?

A12: 49.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A12: Superior.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, the equivalent to a Degree?

A12: University degree, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, no Master?

A12: No, only degree.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In which country do you live?

A12: Spain.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we will move on to the language knowledge section.

What is your mother tongue/s?

A12: Castilian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Which languages do you speak? Saying you speak a language means you can communicate in this language, even if the level is basic or essential.

A12: Valencian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you don't have any English knowledge?

A12: Scarce.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, can we say that it is basic or less than basic?

A12: It can be basic.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you could more or less communicate?

A12: I would have a basic conversation. I would use digital media to translate my words.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now we are moving on to the destination election.

Do you travel more domestically or internationally? Domestic means in your country and international to a foreign country.

A12: Domestic for work, usually for work.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And for leisure reasons? Do you travel more domestically or internationally?

A12: Equal.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What don't you give more priority to one and not to the other? Why is it more or less the same?

A12: First, because I like to discover my country because I like the gastronomy of my country and then many times also for the variable time - money.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you consider it more economical to travel in your country?

A12: No, no, no. The problem is that many times I have less time. If I have 3 days, many times I prefer to do it in a city where I can go two hours by car and be back in case of any need. And when it is more than 4-5 days, I prefer to do it abroad.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What was your last destination for leisure purposes? Why?

A12: Berlin.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, why did you choose this destination?

A12: My partner chose it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and do you know why she chose it?

A12: It was one of the four big cities she still had to visit.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you think that language influenced your choice?

A12: No, in no case has it influenced.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you prefer to travel to a destination where you can speak the language? Why?

A12: Not necessarily. In fact, it's part of the adventure.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it is not a problem for you that you cannot communicate with people at the destination.

A12: Not specific. I know that it is a limitation, but therefore, I bring resources and means. But many times, that is part of the fun.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, then, with those means, do feel able to go to a place where they can't understand you or you don't understand them?

A12: Yes, it has some limitations, the ease of language or an immediate answer to basic

problems. But, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and what means usually helps you?

A12: The mobile phone and previously the typical phrases, the proper declension of needs, and the four basic words to be kind regardless of what you know. To know how to say please and thank you.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, before going to a destination, if you don't speak the language, you usually learn some basic phrases.

A12: At least, yes, of course. "Please, Thank you, bread, toilet, hello, bye". Of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate?

A12: Sorry?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Would you pay more for your vacation if you could communicate?

A12: Well, maybe, yes. Other conditions should be added to that option, but maybe, yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Imagine that they give you a service in which you have a 24-hour telephone number available to ask anything, or if you don't understand something or have a misunderstanding, you have someone who can help you. Would pay more for that service?

A12: Yes.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, great. And concerning the price you pay for the trip, how much would you be willing to pay... I don't mean an amount, but what proportion would you be willing to pay?

A12: Well, the same as I pay for the suitcase insurance on a trip. Which I don't do very often and, not including it in the expenses, being a very low percentage, it is for a much greater peace of mind, of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So a minimum cost, as if it was insurance.

A12: Correct. As if it was for the suitcase. There are so few times that I travel, so I would be ridiculous if my luggage is missing. And therefore, I would take the insurance to feel calmer.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever been to a destination where you couldn't speak your native language?

A12: Yes, of course. Most of the ones I did outside my country. Because I only speak Valencian.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How was your experience?

A12: *Long break* Fun!, frustrating when what you need is a pharmacy. Of course, but I never had a case of medical necessity for health or some other type of emergency. So often, the fact of asking for a coffee when they don't know what it is... is very simple. But it is evident that many destinations... everything is so globalized that it surprises you. In New York, they speak both Spanish and English. It is quite striking, but because in the part of services, there are many times the immigrants of that country. In that case, they are Latin Americans, which was very simple. Maybe it depends more on the... I wouldn't say imprint or character of the country. In Holland, they were very friendly and more strange than being Dutch for us... when we had an issue, they were very kind. It is never a problem.

Actually, it's part of the fun.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever avoided a travel destination because you did not speak the local language?

A12: *long break* no

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, for you, it's not a problem. Even if it's a country you don't know anything about and can't communicate with. Would you not avoid it?

A12: No.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you take into consideration when choosing a destination?

A12: *Long break* Well, I honestly don't know.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What do you usually look for; price, distance, what there is to see, history, what you know, what you have heard...

A12: Well, honestly, I don't remember the reasons why we have gone to the places.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, but for example, if now it is presented to the option of traveling... what would you look for?

A12: The reality is that... there was a period in which... I think it depends a little on the age... at which we always travel through offers. ... many times, offers came after natural disasters. There was a flood in Prague, and we went to Prague; there was another *laughs ironically* natural disaster in Amsterdam, and we went to Amsterdam. That period was fun! But many times, the decisive factor is price.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is your most critical factor when choosing a destination?

A12: The dates on which I can enjoy them because of my work.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Did you ever have a bad experience because of the language?

A12: *Long break* Sure. but I must have forgotten it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, then this experience, or any experiences you may have had, have not changed the way you view international travel?

A12: No, because in this case... There is the limitation of which we are talking about. I mean, imagine that you speak English, so than going to an Anglo-Saxon country or to a Northern European country, there would be no problems. If I go to Senegal, I would have the limitation of English. So, if you remove that scale, the other case would make you choose. "I would never go to an Arab country because they don't speak that much English". Or Asia, but... actually, no, that is not true because Asians speak good English. But since I don't speak any, I don't have that problem.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So you didn't have any misunderstandings during a trip that made you think: "What a bad experience."

A12: For sure, but ... In Paris, when they told us to go left, and we went right, and then the crowd in the metro and to change to another metro line, finding the way back was quite distressing. In the end, we stayed for almost an hour discussing.

It's all about how we deal with it. When you travel, compared to the difference with the rest of the days of the year, there is no rush, so getting lost many times is part of what you discover. Since it happens anywhere for me, it is not a limitation. Of course, when there is a need for assistance, an emergency... because nowadays there are digital media that also helps

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you research the language they speak in the destination before deciding to go to the destination?

A12: *Silence*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: When you have to decide, do you research the language they speak in the destination?

A12: Yes, Yes. And besides, something that is very fun is the physical paper travel guides. Where it tells you about the history, the place, and the monuments, it is a way of monetizing spending a little with a very small investment.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you usually research more about what there is to see and to do than what language they speak? For example, if you go to a destination where you have no idea what language they speak, do you usually research that?

A12: Actually, it would be both fun and curious. Let's say; if you propose me to go to Zimbabwe, I would like to know how to say; Hi and good morning. Or please, thank you, and where is there a toilet? Of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: How does the obtained information on the research affect your decision?

A12: Given that this is before the decision, it is always significant. that is to say, due to my own obsession and without prejudice, I am not attracted to Arab countries. I love their food and their culture, but I never dwelled on Arab countries; there was always a second choice that made me decide on something else.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In other words, if, for example, you discover something about a country that, for example, has an Arab culture or something like that, for example, it would make you refuse to go to that country.

A12: No, no, not at all. Ah, but I don't know why, honestly. I don't know if it's because of the obsession with security that we've been given in recent years; that is to say, I loved Granada; I found it beautiful. I mean, I don't have anything against their culture, don't think that I am xenophobic or something like that, math, agriculture, I live in Valencia, and everything that starts with "beni" is the Arabic language. But I don't know why; I never felt attracted to it. When I have to choose, always another option has been chosen. Maybe you say; let's go tomorrow, and I say yes. But not specially...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Have you ever encountered language-related challenges when making travel plans? For example, a web page that was only in that language and you couldn't understand or something like that?

A12: Sure, and especially years ago, when things were physically filled out, where it was much more complicated to have an instant translation of a text where you had to interact with a man, you couldn't write on the phone and show it to him... Therefore, that has changed. Even today, reading a sign, you can scan it, change the language, and then know that "pharmacy is written". But not something specific.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: And that never made you not go to a country, right?

A12: I recognize that I can be the exception to the norm because many times, when people want to travel, they want something pleasant and relaxed on top of being on vacation. I am not saying that it is the most common. But as... if you interpret it as part of the adventure and moreover, we are speaking about civilized places, you are not going in the middle of the Amazonas or to the Arctic. I interpret it as part of the fun. It's true that 20 years ago when you traveled outside of Spain, you had to go with a guide and were not interacting with anyone. Everything was more difficult, even the museum reading guides. Nowadays, you have a QR with 16 languages, and you hear it from your phone and headphones. Not now, before, yes, it was more difficult, I recognize it.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What are the advantages of communicating with locals in their native language?

A12: oh, huge, it's one of the great things that, for example, I envy people who know the language, interacting with them far beyond your needs, listening, learning, reading the details, you understand a lot of everything of course!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Now I will introduce you to options of 2 destinations, and you have to tell me which one you would choose and why.

What would you choose if you could choose between Italy and Germany?

A12: Italy

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What is the reason for your election?

A12: Food... I love Italian food *laughs*

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Portugal and Montenegro?

A12: Since I was not there, Montenegro. Portugal is beautiful.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So it is merely because you have not been there before, you would discover it.

A12: Exactly.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Greece and Italy?

A12: *Long break* I have not been in any of the two. Maybe because it is further, Greece.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: What would you choose if you could choose between Spain and San Marino?

A12: Being from here, discovering something that I don't know coinciding with motorbikes even better.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: In these four choices you have made. You choose Italy and San Marino, so you only chose two that are really like the languages you know. So, do you think there is an influence between the language spoken in the place and your choice?

A12: Maybe you are right. Because unconsciously, I chose two places where my language and theirs are similar and even more speaking Valencian. Maybe yes, but maybe also for affinity.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Because of Italy and San Marino... San Marino, in the end, is in Italy, so they will understand you and in Italy as well. Montenegro, no but Greece is a Mediterranean country...

A12: Yes. you are totally right.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, you think there is some relation between knowing the language or a similar language?

A12: Honestly, you have made me change my mind. Because you have aroused my curiosity in the way of choosing that I was unaware of, yes. I indeed told you no from the beginning, but my answers contradicted my words. Correct, you are right.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Maybe people don't realize, but unconsciously, because of the languages you know, there is an emotional factor, and you choose things that make you feel safe. In the end, if you have to choose between two destinations, Italy and San Marino are similar more or less to what you speak...

A12: Yes... Maybe it is also related to the tranquility of something more known. But it is true, it has drawn my attention. Correct.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Do you have any thoughts or insights on the relationship between foreign language knowledge and leisure travel decision-making?

A12: Well, given my limitations in this case, not because I have no choice. If you knew French perfectly, for example, it is true that not knowing it makes you lose a lot of that culture, that trip of those little details or what Mrs... "Maruja" says when she is at the door queueing with you at the museum. Of course!

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Ok, and from the countries you have visited, which are the ones that... I mean, how many have you visited that are similar to Spanish? You said that you were in Portugal, France, and Italy, no... so you think you have visited more countries where language has nothing to do with your language? Or did you visit more countries that are more or less similar to Spanish?

A12: Well, I can remember them for you. Spain. all the communities both for work and for leisure. And abroad; New York, Lisbon. Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, so surroundings, etc.... And those have been the ones abroad.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: So, more or less the same but more trips in countries that are more similar to yours. For example, it is more or less the same language in Spain, Portugal, and France. If you had to go to a place where you can't communicate, could you go alone?

A12: *Long break* At the moment?

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Yes

A12: Well, actually, I could.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: But would you do it? To go alone to that place?

A12: Ahh, I didn't know if it was for work, leisure...

Kimberly Maté Kramer: No, it is always because of leisure.

A12: Yes. And to travel alone must be an experience.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: If you would go with a group, would it be enough or better if one person in the group speaks the language?

A12: It is always security or tranquility. And even more when it's a lot of people. I would find it Ideal, of course.

Kimberly Maté Kramer: Thank you very much for your time.

A12: You are very welcome.