

# Digital communication and multilingual practices in four tourism enterprises of the Zadar region

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DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za lingvistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij jezika i komunikacije u višejezičnom društvu (dvopredmetni)

**Matea Šoch Rudić**

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Završni rad

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Zadar, 2022.



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## **Abstract**

Tourists from all around the world choose Croatia as their travel destination during the summer months, but even after the peak of the tourist season, many diverse languages can be heard along the streets of Zadar. Located in northern Dalmatia at the Adriatic coast, Zadar becomes a center where various cultures meet, attracted by its rich historical and cultural heritage. That is a result of globalized processes caused by an easier mobility of people which makes contact between different cultures a common thing. These globalized processes have also had a great impact on the tourism industry creating an increased need for staff with multilingual repertoires because “[t]he knowledge of foreign languages has evidently the key role in the development of tourism which has a multiple role and is viewed as economic, social and cultural activity” (Sindik & Božinović, 2013). In order to maintain their competitive position in the global market, Croatian tourism enterprises have been forced to adapt to those multilingual requirements.

This study aims to investigate how four tourism enterprises situated in the region of Zadar, two hotels and two campsites, use multilingual digital communication to attract potential visitors and the ways in which they cope with the ever-growing need for multilingual repertoires of their staff. Therefore, the main question is whether the companies' practices online are multilingual or not because “as the web becomes more globalized, it is giving rise to more opportunities for multilingual encounters which were not possible in face-to-face contexts” (Barton & Lee, 2017). The study is divided into three parts.

First, the channels of digital communication used by the investigated enterprises, such as their official websites and social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), are analyzed and compared. Their presence on these social media platforms allows them to reach geographically remote potential clients, making them important because they provide insight into their language practices. This part will shed some light on the number and kind of languages predominant in creating a tourist digital identity, similar to the study by Barton and Lee (2011) who collected data about the overall distribution of English and other languages on Flickr. It is hypothesized that the English language will be used predominately, although the investigated enterprises operate in a country where English is not an official language.

Second, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with members of the front-desk staff of all four establishments. The interviews shall provide a valuable insight into their linguistic repertoires and digital competence, the multilingual surrounding they work in, and the companies' views on the (un)importance of multilingual repertoires.

Third, since tourism is all about using and providing services, it is extremely important to take into account the customers' view on the multilingual practices within the investigated establishments. Thus, customers' perspectives on companies' language use and proficiency during their stay or through their digital communication will be gathered and analyzed. The data will be collected from customers' reviews on Tripadvisor.

The expected contribution of the research is to describe the presence of multilingual practices in digital communication in Croatian regions that benefit from the tourism industry. Furthermore, the impact of globalization on a relatively small country which results in cultural contact, and the necessity for adaptation to cultural diversity is highlighted. Indeed, intercultural and communicative language ability plays a significant role in today's multicultural business environment. If acknowledged and incorporated with the thriving potential of digital communication, in addition to the successful development of intercultural dialogue, it could put aside cultural and linguistic differences between tourists and natives.

**Keywords:** digital communication; multilingual practices; digital identity; multilingualism; tourism; social media

## **Sažetak**

Turisti iz cijeloga svijeta biraju Hrvatsku kao svoje odredište tijekom ljetnih mjeseci, no čak i nakon vrhunca turističke sezone na zadarskim ulicama mogu se čuti različiti jezici. Smješten u sjevernoj Dalmaciji na jadranskoj obali, Zadar postaje središte susreta različitih kultura koje privlači njegova bogata povijesna i kulturna baština. To je rezultat globaliziranih procesa uzrokovanih lakšom mobilnošću ljudi zbog čega je kontakt između različitih kultura postao uobičajena pojava. Ovi globalizirani procesi također su imali snažan utjecaj na turističku djelatnost stvarajući povećanu potražnju za osobljem s višejezičnim repertoarom jer je “znanje stranih jezika ključno u razvoju turizma koji ima višestruke uloge te se poima kao ekonomska, društvena i kulturna aktivnost” (Sindik i Božinović, 2013). Kako bi održale konkurentnost na globalnom tržištu, hrvatske turističke tvrtke prisiljene su prilagoditi se novonastalim višejezičnim zahtjevima.

Cilj rada je istražiti kako četiri turističke tvrtke koje se nalaze na području Zadra, dva hotela i dva kampa, koriste digitalnu komunikaciju za privlačenje potencijalnih posjetitelja te na koje se načine nose s neprestano rastućom potrebom za višejezičnom kompetentnošću svog osoblje. Stoga se postavlja pitanje jesu li online prakse tvrtki višejezične ili ne jer “kako se web okružje globalizira, stvara se više mogućnosti za višejezične susrete koji nisu bili mogući licem u lice” (Barton i Lee, 2017). Istraživanje se sastoji od tri dijela.

U prvom dijelu analizirani i uspoređeni su kanali digitalne komunikacije koji uključuju službene stranice i profile na društvenim mrežama (Facebook, Instagram i Twitter). Njihova prisutnost na navedenim društvenim platformama omogućuje im stupanje u kontakt s potencijalnim klijentima koji su geografski udaljeni. Društvene mreže istodobno pružaju uvid u jezičnu praksu, što je od značajne vrijednosti za cijelo istraživanje. Ovaj dio utvrđuje broj i korištene jezike koji prevladavaju u kreiranju turističkog digitalnog identiteta slično istraživanju kojeg su proveli Barton i Lee (2011) prikupljajući podatke o ukupnoj distribuciji engleskog jezika na mreži Flickr. Pretpostavlja se da je engleski jezik pretežno korišten, usprkos činjenici da istraživane tvrtke posluju u zemlji u kojoj engleski nije službeni jezik.

Drugo, polustrukturirani intervjui provode se s članovima osoblja na recepciji sve četiri tvrtke. Intervjui pružaju dragocjen uvid u njihove lingvističke kompetencije i digitalnu kompetenciju, višejezično radno okružje te u stavove tvrtki o (ne)važnosti višejezičnih repertoara. Treće, budući da se u turizmu radi isključivo o korištenju i pružanju usluga, izuzetno je važno uzeti u obzir mišljenje kupaca o višejezičnim praksama unutar istraživanih objekata. Iz tog razloga je u istraživanje uključena perspektiva klijenata o korištenju i razini jezika tijekom njihovog boravka ili putem njihove digitalne komunikacije. Podatci su prikupljeni iz recenzija klijenata na platformi Tripadvisor.

Očekivani doprinos istraživanja opisati je prisutnost višejezičnih praksi u digitalnoj komunikaciji na hrvatskom području koje profitira od turizma. Nadalje, ističe se utjecaj globalizacije na relativno malu zemlju što rezultira povećanim kulturnim dodirima te nužnosti prilagodbe na kulturnu raznolikost. Uistinu, interkulturalna i komunikativna jezična sposobnost igra značajnu ulogu u današnjem multikulturalnom poslovnom okružju. Ako se prepozna i ukomponira s prosperitetnim potencijalom digitalne komunikacije, uz nastojanje da se razvije uspješan međukulturalni dijalog, kulturne i jezične razlike između turista i domorodaca bi se mogle savladati.

**Ključne riječi:** digitalna komunikacija; višejezične prakse; digitalni identitet; višejezičnost; turizam; društvene mreže



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## 1. Introduction

In order to compete in the global marketplace, every company needs to keep pace with technological advancements and innovations. Establishing a presence in a virtual world is no longer a matter of creativity or additional efforts, but rather a necessity, as Hudson (2014) argues, the parties included in tourism are forced to pursue clients online. Rapid and ubiquitous globalization has affected every sector of the economy, and the tourism and hospitality sector is not excluded. Contemporary tourism bears little resemblance to the tourism of half a century ago. Perhaps one of the most notable distinctions lies in the convenience and ease of finding information about travel destinations. Hence, the journey commences even before one reaches the desired destination, and compared to the past, it implies significantly less hassle. As Balula et al. (2019) claim, digital technology has not merely positively transformed the behavior of travelers prior to their trip but also serves to both enrich and share the experience. With just a few clicks, an individual can discover distant locations that they may not have been aware of beforehand.

Traveling to geographically distant sites is not uncommon these days since, as mentioned previously, technological advancements have had an impact on more than just the tourism industry (Minghetti & Buhalis, 2010). Transportation infrastructure has vastly improved, the convenience of transport methods has been elevated to a qualitatively higher level, and public transportation links between national and international cities are frequent. Improvements in one industry result in advancements in another. Thus, not only have tourism enterprises recognized the potential of more accessible mobility along with the chance to exploit it but also many countries are encouraging and supporting such goals with a variety of policies. The importance of tourism for the state, tourism enterprises, citizens living in the area considered as a destination, and the workforce, in general, is discussed later in the paper.

The paper is concerned with all factors that are impacting the tourism sector. However, special attention is given to use of various digital communication means used by tourism enterprises. By investigating four Croatian businesses active in the tourism industry in the region of Zadar it is expected to obtain an insight into the tools, language practices, and communicative strategies they use that are directed towards the objective of increase of tourism overnights and finally the increase of their profit overall. More specifically, the paper addresses the potential

of digital communication, especially social media, generally used by the targeted audience in tourism industry, as Daxböck et al. (2021) disclose.

## 2. Theoretical framework

People are connected more than ever, whether for personal causes such as keeping in touch with friends and family, or professional reasons. Even small companies or individuals who have started a business do not overlook the potential that digitalization has to offer. Undoubtedly, the numerous digital means of communication have changed human behavior in order to satisfy various needs, but mainly social ones. Morozov and Morozova (2020) indicate, due to the strong presence and influence of digital technologies tourists' needs have undergone a change, and the Internet is commonly used. The statement is indirectly supported by Happ and Ivancsó-Horváth's (2018) observation that among other benefits, the virtual world enables the service providers an approach to reach consumers and collaborate with them. Therefore, both parties prosper from engagement on the web. Furthermore, the communication online aids companies in swift solving of commonly occurring disputes associated with purchased services or products (Kayumovich, 2020). Although these conclusions may seem anticipated and sound plausible, just being present online does not automatically imply that the action will result in success. Digitalization has certainly provided a means for the tourism enterprise to expose itself to the rest of the world, but so did to the competitors. It is essential to develop good communication and intercultural skills, along with an adequate understanding of advertising strategies to stand out from the crowd. In addition to the endless information overload and a constant spread of online offers, cultural differences need to be taken into account as well.

Culture, and therefore the language of the intercultural visitor, must be considered when choosing and reaching the target audience, selecting the means of communication, and creating a digital identity that will be viewable to all online users. In her case study conducted in the Croatian city of Pula, Urošević (2012) takes a stance of defining tourism principally as a manner of cultural exchange among diverse identities and cultural backgrounds. Croatian tourism and marketing strategies mainly focused on the intercultural population are discussed later in the paper, but it is more than suitable to stress the importance of awareness of cultural disparities and what role they have in communication between the members involved in the tourism in the country. Awareness about cultural and linguistic differences should not be

neglected, both in a real and virtual world, for their acknowledgment and understanding, contribute to the improvement of service and business interests. While Urošević emphasizes the impact of culture on tourism, Lee (2016) reveals her opinion about the necessity of development of cultural and linguistic diverseness on the web, and as a reaction to it, its acceptance by global users. In the case of tourism enterprises, the validation of linguistic diversities should be a traditional practice, but it should be as well understood as a hypothetical obstacle when attracting potential clients.

Consequently, the prominence of networked multilingualism is brought into the discussion. The term used by Androutsopoulos (2015) refers to multilingual practices carried out in written form by language users who address an online audience while simultaneously utilizing network resources. Tourism enterprises that want to attract foreign visitors must keep in mind the fact that virtual audiences tend to differ in the languages they use. Accordingly, language choice and multilingual practices employed by tourism enterprises when using digital communicative tools are intertwined with digital tourism, which is defined by Benyon et al. (2014) as support in digital shape available to the tourist during the touristic visit, but as well before it starts, and when it is over. As mentioned earlier, it has become a common practice that the touristic activity begins before physically visiting a chosen location. Prior to the selection of a suitable accommodation, the touristic destination must be determined. The choice may be based on a wide range of individual reasons. Some tourists prefer quiet and isolated places, while others seek adventures in the urban areas or even on other rarely explored trails. Respectively to his own preferences, the user will usually examine online websites, read travel articles, consult with travel agencies, etc. After determining the location, tourists book accommodation. For this reason, the tourism enterprises need to evoke an image of a trustful and competent company that is, indeed, able to fulfill their needs for the money spent. Linguistic diversity and knowledge of foreign languages, therefore, constitute useful assets in this context.

It is indisputable that a business's self-promotion as being multilingual appeals to a broader audience and perhaps lowers customers' fears of eventual language barriers, which may ultimately engender a lack of mutual understanding. The choice of language surely plays a key role. In their paper, Barton and Lee (2017) state that participants of digital communication go through a period of negotiation of their linguistic resources and utilize the most appropriate one for the context of addressing people, who may or may not share the same language. Based on the authors' premise, when contacting a company, some potential customers may opt for a

particular language due to the fact that they have seen that corporate information on the official website is provided in that language. Further in the paper, the importance of language choice will be explained in the example of tourism enterprises in Zadar.

Contacting a hospitality establishment is not a mandatory phase to assure it is the finest option disposable. Potential customers can merely check ratings and reviews published by previous visitors who have resided at the establishment. At this point, a return to the prior claim that digital technology prolongs the travel experience, even when it is over, is crucial. Királ'ová and Pavlíčka (2015) assert that visitors' comments and personal feedback reveal to future customers what in reality is to be expected. The same remark is made by van Nuenen and Scarles (2021) who later note an upsurge of digital engagement in those aspects. Of course, both negative and positive responses have a positive outcome for the client, but the same cannot be stated for the service provider. Since it is hard to track what kind of feedback is published online, companies may seek a solution in new media. To promptly and efficiently resolve any occurring inconveniences and lessen the jeopardy to the public image, businesses are beginning to rely on social media. As Gorlevskaya (2016) points out numerous advantages of social media users entangled in the tourism industry including informing and starting a discourse with clients with an intention to upgrade the given service, it is necessary to highlight that the instantaneous reaction to damaging reviews posted on social media accounts of tourism enterprises is achievable. Ethical firms should not delete or hide harmful comments, instead, they should work on establishing direct contact with the unsatisfied consumer. Events such as these open the opportunity to slightly influence or radically reshape the customer's previous viewpoint. Regardless of the outcome, those witnessing the incident will surely perceive that the corporation cares about the arisen neglect of the client's needs and its willingness to smooth out the deed.

Such influence on decision-making achieved by social media is elaborated by Gupta et al. (2018). In their paper, they claim that information is a vital element of the tourism industry and, as such, it is heavily impacted by social media. Not only can information be easily sent out to a wide audience of social networks, but it can also result in a piece of new information given from another party, e.g., a customer. Although the feedback contributes to the improvement of quality and resolution of occurred problems, not all branches involved in the tourism industry view it as a source of information. As Kumpu et al. (2021) report in their research about the value of social media marketing from the point of view of destination

marketing organizations (DMO), social platforms are preferred as a promotion tool, and not a means of interaction with travelers. To successfully transmit the desired information and attract virtual audiences' attention workers responsible for publishing posts on the social media channels need to pay attention to the choice of a language.

### 3. Methodology

The first collection of the data is gathered on the official websites. The focus lies on the languages used. Included in this segment is whether social media platforms are connected to their official sites and if so, which ones. Focus lies primarily on Facebook (Meta Platforms, Inc., 2022), Twitter (Twitter, Inc., 2022), and Instagram (Meta Platforms, Inc., 2022).

The second data source includes number of posts and comments on social media. The period covered ranges from June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

In the third segment, the information is obtained from Tripadvisor (Tripadvisor, Inc., 2022). Of particular interest will be the number of reviews, the scores given by customers (from 0 to 5) and the number of languages in which customers have left their comments. Any other aspects of the businesses are not covered, as the paper is concerned with digital communication and multilingual practices.

The interviews with the front desk personnel represent the fourth phase of the data collection. The objective of the semi-structured interviews is to scrutinize the language practices and strategies used when communicating with customers, both online and on-site. Therefore, the study expands from first-hand published content on the websites and social media available to the public to clients' perspectives and satisfaction with the service provided.

Finally, the employees are also an important source of the companies' operations and are therefore an essential element and a direct representative of each tourism enterprise studied. The diversity of data ensures a deeper understanding of Croatian tourism enterprises located in the same region. The limit of the research is the number of companies studied, as tourism in the Zadar region is well developed and there are many companies and even individuals offering accommodation services. However, since the research is focused on two campsites and two

hotels, which differ in size, offer and popularity, general conclusions can be drawn about the language choice and practices in the business environment of the region.

#### 4. Tourism in Croatia

The pandemic caused by the Coronavirus has impacted all industries worldwide. The tourism and hospitality sector is no exception. Based on data from the Institute for Tourism (2021) it is apparent that 4.2 million arrivals were recorded in August 2021, 163% more than the same month in 2020 and 86% more than in 2019. In the same report, the figures further suggest an increase in the number of overnight stays. In August 2021, more than 27 million overnight stays were recorded, which is 156% higher than in 2020 and 94% than in 2019. Furthermore, the comparison of statistics regarding tourism in 2021 and 2020 by the Croatian National Tourist Board (2021) clearly affirms the difference in arrival and overnights. The contrast is shown in the following table:

Types of accommodation	I – XII 2021.		I – XII 2020.		Monthly index	
	Arrivals	Overnights	Arrivals	Overnights	Arrivals	Overnights
Hotels	4.086.304	15.686.729	1.926.883	6.996.040	212,07	224,22
Campsites	2.580.464	17.380.396	1.289.502	9.050.698	200,11	192,03
Family farm	25.015	95.211	14.675	60.986	170,46	156,12
Household facilities	4.973.078	32.146.757	3.170.278	22.158.571	156,87	145,08
Other hospitality capacities for accommodation	1.194.294	5.523.375	667.267	3.272.689	187,98	168,76
Other	6.115	29.751	1.483	7.962	412,34	373,66
Restaurants	1.445	2.952	1.388	3.166	104,11	93,24
<b>Total commercial accommodation</b>	<b>12.866.715</b>	<b>70.865.171</b>	<b>7.071.476</b>	<b>41.550.409</b>	<b>181,95</b>	<b>170,55</b>
Noncommercial accommodation	466.852	10.182.427	455.872	11.200.919	102,41	90,91
Nautical	447.829	3.081.697	235.845	1.649.015	189,88	186,88
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.781.396</b>	<b>84.129.295</b>	<b>7.763.193</b>	<b>54.400.343</b>	<b>177,52</b>	<b>154,65</b>

Table 1. Comparison of tourists' arrivals and overnights in 2021 and 2020

The statistics from the last two years indicate the recovery of the tourism industry after the pandemics started at the end of 2019. Accommodation providers over the globe were faced



with a great challenge during the crisis, and their communication online was vital to their visitors. Due to this unforeseen circumstance, digital communication became a subject of interest to some researchers. Hence, Zizka et al. (2021) examined online communication of 4- and 5-star Swiss hotels on Facebook. The city of Zadar reached in 2021 the 5<sup>th</sup> place in the top 10 Croatian destinations according to the total touristic traffic of local and foreign tourists (calculated in overnights) with a total of 311.465 overnights. However, Zadar did not make it into the top 10 cities when it comes to the overnights made by foreign visitors, the Croatian National Tourism Board (2021) verifies. Moreover, Orsini and Ostojić (2018) conclude that tourism and industry sector plays key role in country's economy. Needless to say, the tourism industry in Croatia is of great importance for the whole country. Since almost every country in the world relies on tourism to some extent, Croatian corporations need to permanently invest in digital communication and marketing.

#### *4.1. Campsite A*

The relatively small family campsite was open in 2014 and four people are employed. Since the family is actively engaged in day-to-day operations, it can be concluded that the total number of employees is six. The campsite stretches on almost 2.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The accommodation is divided into three types – a room in the hostel, a mobile home, and a pitch where a tent can be placed, or a camper parked. The service consists of free wi-fi, a pool, and a café. The object is located above the beach, enabling its clients to reach it by a short walk.

#### *4.2. Campsite B*

The campsite opened during the 1980s. Although the area of the campsite is large, around 30.000 m<sup>2</sup>, currently it has seven employees. The campsite offers accommodation in a form of rent of a mobile home, a tent, or an empty pitch. Different than campsite A, the connection to wi-fi is charged and there is no café or a pool. Therefore, Campsite B offers the smallest range of services to their customers.

### 4.3. Hotel A

The hotel chain decided to open the luxurious hotel in 2011. The hotel's usable area covers more than 35.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The visitors can choose between rooms and suites. The service includes a spa and a fitness center, outdoor pools, a waterpark, and courts for a variety of sports activities. The whole hotel employs around 300 workers. Hence, Hotel A is the biggest tourism enterprise of the selected ones, both in its size, offer, and staff.

### 4.4. Hotel B

The tourism enterprise has 12 apartments and 195 rooms with a free internet connection. It welcomed its first clients in the late 1970s. The area counts a little less than 9.000 m<sup>2</sup>. It also has pools and restaurants. The number of employees is around 55.

## 5. Digital communication tools used by selected tourism enterprises

Referring to Hudson (2014), the website, social media and e-mail are classified as the communication options of digital marketing. In the following section, the official websites of selected tourism companies are examined, followed by their official social networks. Additionally, the use of e-mail as a communication tool will be examined through interviews with an employee of the respective companies.

### 5.1. Official Website

Even though the selected tourism enterprises are situated in the same region, the choice of language varies on their official websites. As is visible from Table 2, both campsites and Hotel A have four languages in common. However, Campsite B offers additional six languages, and Hotel B has the smallest scope of only two languages, of which one is national.

Campsite A	Croatian, English, German, Italian
Campsite B	Croatian, English, German, Italian, French, Dutch, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Slovenian

Hotel A	Croatian, English, German, Italian
Hotel B	Croatian, English

Table 2. Distribution of languages on official websites

It can be assumed that Campsite B needs to display more languages in order to attract accidental passengers and travelers without a reservation in other accommodation objects. Therefore, the enterprise has more benefits to give general information about the campsite in various languages. The potential passerby in need of accommodation can decide with more ease to choose the campsite if the information is easily accessible. On other hand, Campsite A and Hotel A decided to represent themselves in three foreign languages, and Hotel B in only one, which makes it less multilingual in comparison to other companies. That leads to a conclusion that Hotel B may be at a disadvantageous position on the market. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that visitors might expect the staff to speak the languages presented on the website. Chances are that customers will be disappointed and frustrated upon hearing that this is not the case. Besides the choice of languages displayed, tourism enterprises differ in additional aspects as shown in Table 3.

Published information	Campsite A	Campsite B	Hotel A	Hotel B
Location	+	+	+	+
Phone number	+	+	+	+
Video	+	-	-	+
Live cam	+	-	-	-
E-mail	+	+	+	+
Links to social media	+	+	+	+
Newsletter	-	-	+	-
Client's reviews	+	+	+	+
Links to review platforms	+	-	-	-

Table 3. Published information on official websites

Gorlevskaya (2016) declares a need for all communication channels to be indicated on the website. Indeed, no difference is found between the studied companies concerning this issue, and it can be presumed that all of them are conscious of the usefulness of social media. The e-

mail address is published on all websites, as well as their respective official social media channels, although it differs slightly in choice of them. The main difference regarding the digital communication is the option of a newsletter which is to be found only in the case of Hotel A. Reviews and comments of former customers are shown on all websites. Important to note is that Campsite A offers a link of the Tripadvisor platforms as well. Because of the positive comments and high ratings, it can be assumed that the company's strategy of attracting new customers relies on the comments of former visitors. Only Hotel A has chosen not to display reviews directly. A short reviews summary icon is displayed on the webpage, which if clicked on reveals reviews collected from Google, Tripadvisor, Booking.com, Hotels.com, and Expedia. There is also an additional step of choosing a form of the planned trip (couple, friends, or family) after which customers' assessments are shown. Meaningful to mention is that the reviews are available only in foreign languages, not Croatian. All observed companies can be reached over the phone. Table 4 contains information about the choice of the social media platforms.

Campsite A	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube
Campsite B	Facebook, Twitter
Hotel A	Facebook*, Instagram*, (Twitter*), YouTube*
Hotel B	Facebook, Instagram
* = linked to a larger corporate account of the company ( ) = exists, but is not shown on the examined website	

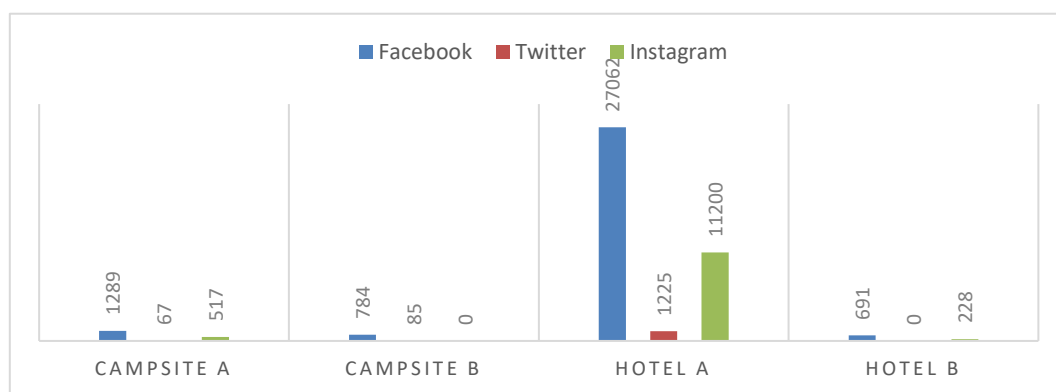
Table 4. Links to the social media on the official website

All enterprises have a profile on Facebook, yet Hotel A merged their account in 2022 with their corporate account which is dedicated to all their hotels in Croatia. The company can also be found on social media Instagram, but the profile is not about this particular tourism object, but about all tourism enterprises located in Croatia. YouTube, on the other hand, contains videos of all corporate units all over Europe. The strategy to unify individual hotels with other hotels in different locations serves as a promotion tool. Potential visitors may search for information about a specific residence but may find another hotel that they like more. Interestingly, Hotel A also has a profile on Twitter about the enterprise in general but is not displayed on the website of this hotel. Instead, the Twitter link is to be found on the official website. This means that the investigated hotel is not directly in charge of what is published on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Undisputably, the company may participate in making decisions about what is

beneficial and worth publishing but the work is distributed among workers of other business units. Therefore, Campsite A is in the first place in numbers of social media since it is present on four platforms. With this method the campsite makes sure to cover wider virtual audience, but it is more time-consuming to be present on all social media channels. Campsite B has a Twitter account but is not present on Instagram. In the case of Hotel B, it is vice versa.

## 5.2. Social media

The following section discusses the implications of social media presence. Emphasis is placed on the utilized language, and the companies' engagement in responding to clients' comments. Palamarova (2018) asserts that social media platforms enable the effective delivery of essential information, clarification of queries, and bringing the destination closer to users. Graph 1 indicates the number of followers on selected social media platforms of observed tourism enterprises.

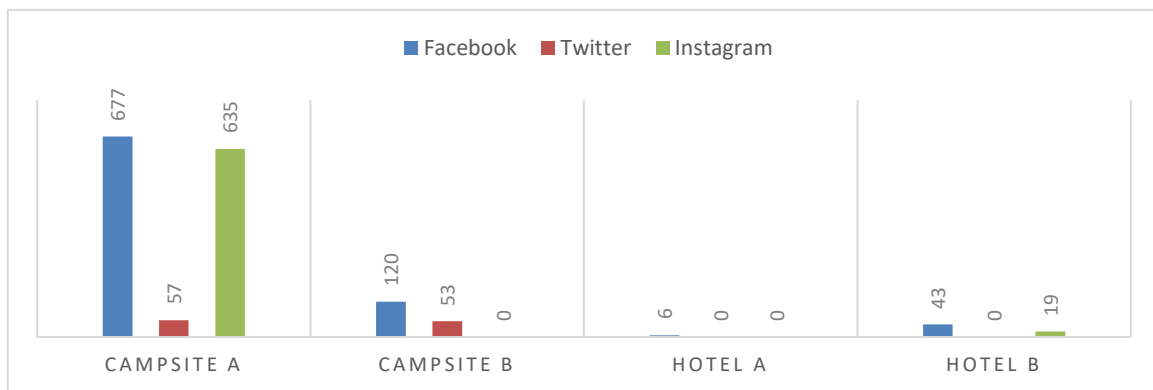


Graph 1. Number of followers on social media on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

At first, the data indicate that Hotel A enjoys the highest number of followers on every social platform. Nevertheless, that is only partially true. Hotel A has in excess of 27,000 Facebook followers more than its successor, Campsite A, but the account is inactive. In April of 2022, the profile was incorporated with other accommodation providers of the same chain situated in Croatia. Therefore, the company is advertised with other hotels on the same Facebook account which is followed by 130,114 people. The apparent gain in using this market approach is that the clientele with the same preferences is targeted. It is likely that former visitors of one hotel will choose another as a result of being satisfied with the quality of service. A Facebook profile that covers all hotels in a country has easier navigation and data accessibility for the user, but

some people may only want to be notified about one hotel, not all of them. The same strategy is deployed on the Instagram account, and to a certain degree on Twitter. Twitter is also used as a corporate account for more hotels, but foreign hotels of the same chain are promoted on the account in addition to the Croatian. It can be stated that Twitter is the least active social media platform by the number of followers, and perhaps that fact can explain why the company decided to incorporate all hotels despite the national borders.

Another important aspect of the analysis are the published posts. While it would be reasonable to assume that the most active company is the one with the highest number of followers, this is not the case. The following graph shows the opposite:



Graph 2. Number of posts on social media channels on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

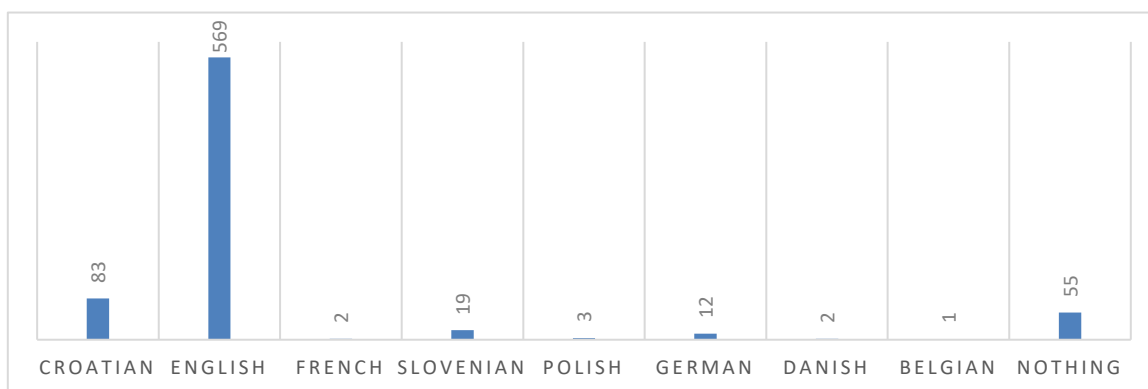
Since Hotel A has an official account only on Facebook, which is not a collaborative type as it is the case on the rest of the social media, it will be included in the study. In other cases, the data could be either irrelevant or difficult to determine precisely when it is about the observed company. For example, there are a total of 419 Twitter posts in the last seven years, but only 19 of them concern Hotel A. Therefore, it is obvious that the collaborative approach in social media also has its drawbacks. It is quite possible that 19 posts will be overlooked in the abundance of information about other hotels. Posts related to the selected property account for 4.53% of the total amount of posts published. However, on Instagram, the description of posts does not always include the location or name of the tourism enterprise. This represents an obstacle in determining whether the content relates to the observed hotel.

Campsite A is the most active on all social media. From the total number of posts and followers it is to be concluded that Facebook is the most popular tool of digital communication. It is the only platform which all enterprises decided to operate on, since Campsite B does not possess

a profile on Instagram, and Hotel B is not present on Twitter. The second most popular network is Instagram, because all Twitter accounts are currently not active. Further in the paper, the details are analyzed and discussed.

### 5.2.1. Facebook

In the period from 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 until 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2022, a total of 677 posts have been published on the official Facebook account of Campsite A. Graph 3 shows the language distribution of the published content. Important to note is the number of occurrences that overpasses the total number of posts. If the instances of languages are counted, there are 691 occurrences on 677 posts. The number of languages exceeds the posts because there were 62 posts in which two languages were used and one with even three languages – English, German and Croatian.

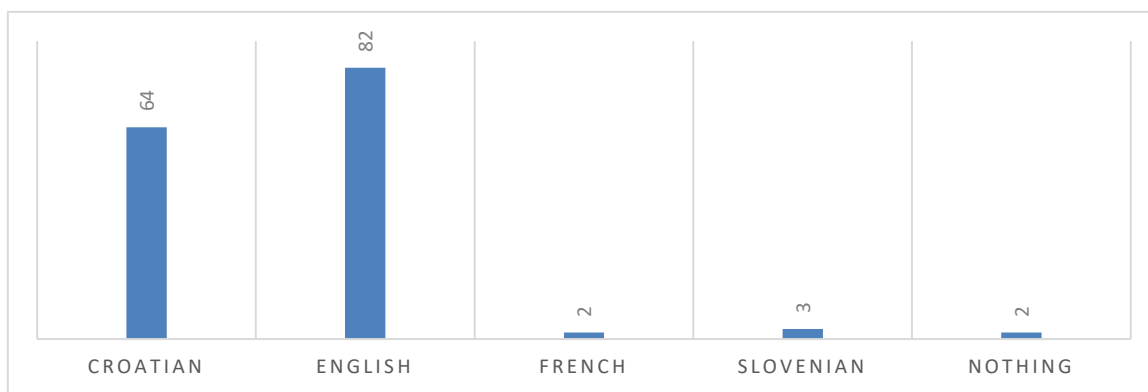


Graph 3. Language distribution of posts on Facebook by Campsite A

The tourism enterprise uses social media to inform customers about discounts, accomplishments, new events, and reviews of other visitors. How much reviews are important is shown in the company's action of posting one hand-written review of their clients, one publication about Tripadvisor, and four posts about being rewarded by Booking.com Review Award. This company also shared 18 posts about being in a newspaper and five won awards. Apart from Tripadvisor, they also posted six YouTube videos on their news feed. They decided to promote the campsite via Live Cam. If compared to the other investigated enterprises, this is a unique strategy to attract visitors. Surprisingly, Campsite A publishes the content most

frequently and has the highest number of comments left by the followers, a total of 957 comments. The company replied 350 times.

In the case of Campsite B, there is a total of 120 posts on Facebook from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 until the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2022. As is seen from Graph 4, English is the most represented language, followed by Croatian. The combination of two languages in one post is less frequent when compared to Campsite A. There are 33 posts with two languages. There are 71 comments left by followers, and 21 responses from the enterprise. One client informed the company, but so as the other followers, that they did not reply to his inquiry via e-mail. In this way, one digital communication channel was used to inform the company of getting no response.



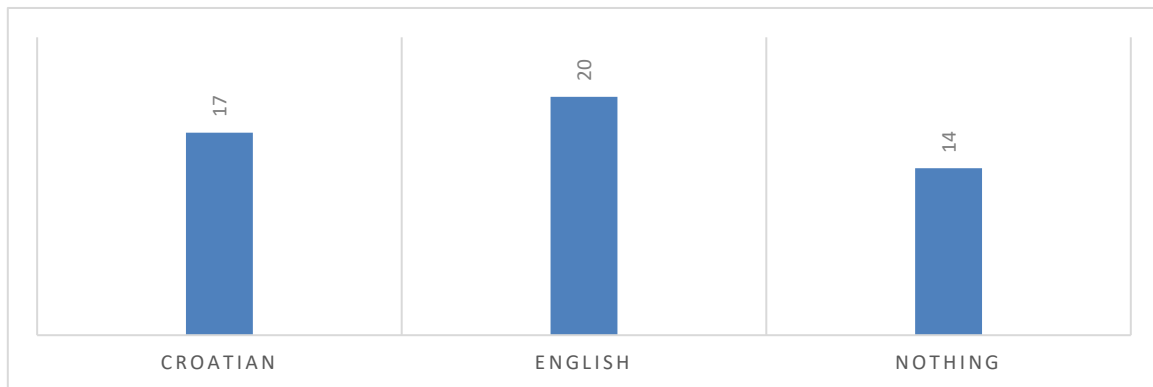
Graph 4. Language distribution of posts on Facebook by Campsite B

Hotel A's activity on the social media platform is the lowest. There are only six posts of which five are photos without a description and a total of ten comments left by clients. There is only one post in Croatian that informs the audience that the profile of the respective tourism enterprise is not active anymore, but it has rather merged into a corporate one. The duration of the account was from the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 until the 4<sup>th</sup> of April of the same year. Therefore, Hotel A does not have a distinctive account on Facebook. The company is promoted along with other hotels situated in Croatia. On one hand, this strategy can be a good tool for the promotion of all hotels located in different parts of the country. On other hand, some potential clients may want to navigate through information about only the particular hotel, and not all of them. The customer may find information about the hotel with more ease and in less time than scrolling all of the content as it is in the case of Hotel A.

The Facebook profile of Hotel B was opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2017 and the last post was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2021. The company's profile is bilingual while it relies on English



and Croatian. There are 42 posts in total, but eight times the posts were written in a combination of two languages. The overall distribution of languages is shown below in graph 5. As Campsite A, Hotel B published a post dedicated to their YouTube video. One post is also about their official Instagram. Therefore, the company promotes its other digital platforms while addressing its virtual audience. There are four comments left by customers.



Graph 5. Language distribution of posts on Facebook by Hotel B

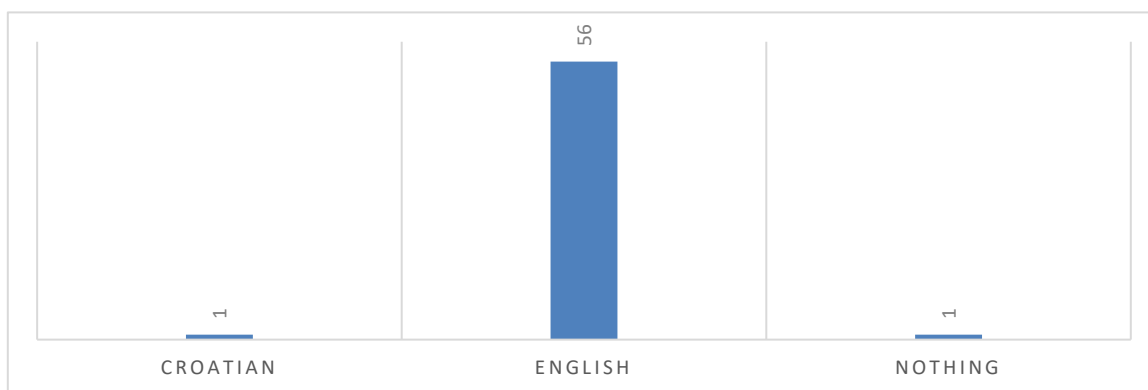
It can be concluded that Campsite A used the highest number of languages on its official Facebook account as it is apparent from Table 5. Campsite B holds the second place, followed by Hotel B. When the official web and Facebook site of Hotel B are compared, there is a sign of the enterprise's consistency in its choice of languages. In both cases, English and the native language of the country are used. There is not a single occurrence of Italian on Facebook of Campsite A, despite it being shown on the official website. Campsite B gives information in ten languages on the webpage, but only four are used on Facebook.

Campsite A	Croatian, English, German, French, Slovenian, Polish, Belgian, Danish	8
Campsite B	Croatian, English, French, Slovenian	4
Hotel A	Croatian	1
Hotel B	Croatian, English	2

Table 5. Total number of languages used on the Facebook accounts of the companies

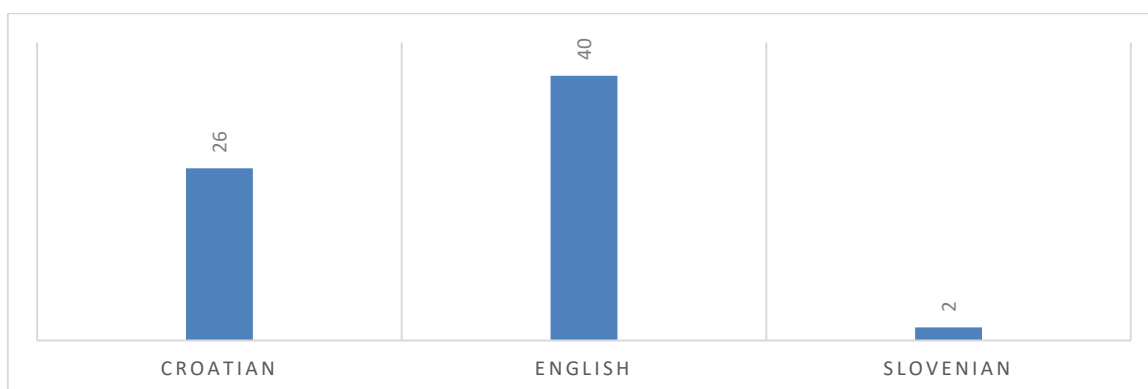
### 5.2.2. Twitter

Campsite A became active on Twitter in May 2014. The data is extracted from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 until the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 when the enterprise published its last tweet. There are 57 tweets, from which English is most frequent. The activity on Twitter is significantly lower than on Facebook, and Croatian is used only once alongside English. YouTube channel is promoted only once, what also goes for notification about an award, the appearance in the press, and good reviews on Booking.com.



Graph 6. Language distribution of posts on Twitter by Campsite A

Campsite B opened an account on Twitter in January in 2010. The company was active on platform for nine years. Thus, the data is collected from 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 until 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2019. There are 53 posts, but 15 posts are in two languages which is visible on the graph 6. Unlike Campsite A, the company promotes its Facebook account quite often. More than half of the posts, 35 of them, contain a link to a post on its respective Facebook account.

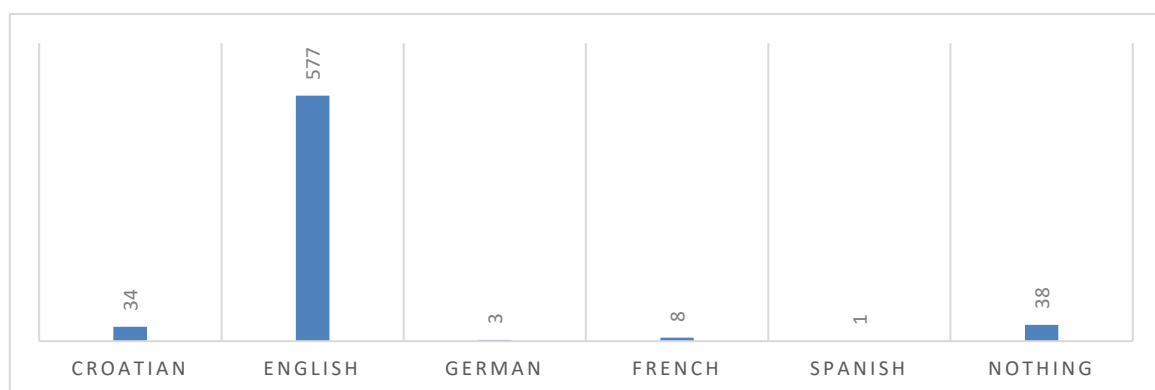


Graph 7. Language distribution of posts on Twitter by Campsite B

Again, Hotel A does not have its own Twitter account, but it has been merged with other accounts. This time, however, all hotel chains regardless of their location are represented on it. Unlike on Facebook, there is no account responsible for the promotion of hotels in Croatia, but all hotels are to be found on Twitter, where the German language dominates. A possible explanation for the prevalence of German may be the company's origin, as it was founded in Austria, where German is the official language. Lastly, Hotel B has never been active on these social media.

### 5.2.3. Instagram

Campsite A is almost as active on Instagram as it is on Facebook. 635 posts were collected from a time span from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 until the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2022. That means that there is a small deviation in 42 posts between Facebook and Instagram accounts. The contrast, however, is in the languages used. The English language is the most distributed language on the account as it is shown in Graph 8.



Graph 8. Language distribution of posts on Instagram by Campsite A

The further difference is in the published content. On Instagram, the company is less engaged in informing about the won prizes and its presence in various newspapers. There are nine posts about recognitions and four about the newspaper. In one post, the company appealed to the public to contact them by e-mail if they had any questions.

Campsite B does not have a profile on Instagram. Once again, information about Hotel A can be found on the corporate account of the company. The strategy used on Facebook is repeated

on Instagram, which means that the account deals only with hotels located inside Croatian borders.

As in the cases of presence on Facebook and Twitter, Hotel A does not have a specific account dedicated to the hotel in the region of Zadar.

Hotel B's first post was published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and the last on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2021. The activity is smaller than on Facebook with just 19 published pictures. Every post was written in the English language and four times it was combined with Croatian. Important to note that the company as well encourages its followers to contact them via e-mail if any doubts or questions arise.

## 6. Interview analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one front staff member of each tourism enterprise. Valuable insights regarding multilingual practices and communication are gathered from the workers that are part of the companies and as such are a valuable source of information. For the research to be more reliable, it is always profitable to have multiple data sources.

### *6.1. Language biography of informants*

In such a fast and continuously progressing industry such as tourism, it is utterly advisable to keep up the pace with changes in technology, but the investment in personnel should not be neglected. After all, the tourism and hospitality sector relies on human workforce, and contact between the visitor and workers is inevitable. To minimize the possibility of misunderstanding and speech barriers, there is a need for employees to speak more than one foreign language. As Perman and Mikinec (2014) pointed out in their study, one of the problems Croatian tourism enterprises are faced with is seasonal workforce. It is challenging to invest in workers who are working only for a couple of months when the peak of the season is on. From the statistics published by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2022), it is visible that the tourism begins to grow in May, and reaches a high point in August, after which the tourism begins to drop. Hence,

the Croatian tourism sector is confronted with a serious problem. Indeed, the lack of a workforce during the summer months has been a hectic discussion over the last few years. Besides finding capable and reliable workers, there is a need to educate them in developing a suitable set of skills. The workers are in direct contact with visitors and must be always at their disposal, conclude Happ and Ivancsó-Horváth (2018). Furthermore, they stress the relevance of human communication. In order to successfully lead a conversation with tourists and understand their needs, workers must possess intercultural and communicative skills.

The first informant, who works as a bartender/receptionist in Campsite A, is 19 years old and is currently studying in Osijek, although she comes from a village near Zadar. Her native language is Croatian, but she also speaks English and German and understands Italian. She has four years of experience working in the tourism gained in Campsite A.

The receptionist of campsite B is 18 years old and lives in a small village nearby Zadar. She is currently attending the 4th grade of secondary school and last summer she worked in the enterprise for the first time. Her native language is Croatian, and she learned English and Italian in school.

The employee with the longest career in tourism is from Germany but moved to Croatia with his parents as a child. He has worked in the tourism industry between nine to ten years and works in the management sector in Hotel A. His native language is Croatian. He speaks German, which he learned from his parents, and English and Italian, which he learned by reading books and watching movies.

The fourth respondent is 25 years old and currently lives in Zadar. He has been working in Hotel B as a receptionist for two and a half years but has eight years of experience working in the tourism industry. His native language is Croatian, but he is also proficient in English, Italian and German. It is important to mention that he is the only informant who has education in the field of tourism.

## 6.2. Digital communication and competencies

All informants were asked if they think that the company's presence online is a good business strategy (see Appendix A for the questions asked and Appendix B for the meaning of the symbols used). All respondents gave a positive response:

cmpA	ye:::s ↓ because everything is online now and	
	you can get adds anywhere (.) and there eye	
	catching so you get ↓ more tourists to come	

cmpB	yes because in today (.) nowadays a:::	
	everything is put everything is put it on the	
	internet so::: (.)people looks that and if	
	they s=saw some beautiful picture of ↓ (.)	
	our pla:::ce they wanted they then they (.)	
	follows us on our page site and that's (.)	
	really important (.) in our days today	

hotA	of course they have a broad reach so you	
	have to use all the tools to get to the	
	clients	

hotB	a::: i think so . i think it is ↓ because	
	they have a (.) a::: they have a potential	
	to reach and to spread wider in the market	
	↓ which is always a good thing (.) i think	
	there's nothing negative in that they can	
	only gain a benefit from it	

Furthermore, informants from Campsite A and Hotel B expressed that Facebook is the social media that reaches the most clients. Interestingly, the informant from Campsite B named Instagram as the most valuable social channel, but the company does not use it. As mentioned earlier, the company has an active account on Facebook and an inactive one on Twitter. The informant from Hotel A suggested that neither Facebook nor Instagram reach the company's target audience. In his opinion, the official website is the most effective in that segment. He believes that younger people use social media while the elderly population is reached over the webpage:

hotA	so::: (hhh) all of the public medias are used	
	of course from::: small newspapers and still	
	of course the social medias like facebook	
	(.hhh) a:::nd instagram and so on anything	
	that could (hhh) acquire a broad::: (.)	
	spectrum of clients (.) bu:::t-t of course	
	my opinion is that m-mo:::re modern (0.2)	
	social medias aren't very effective for our	
	company because (.) we are out of their price	
	range so::: for younger people so mo:::stly	
	(.hhh) elder::: (. ) people::: (. ) that are	
	very good financial background are making the	
	booking (.) in our hotels of course	

None of the informants is in charge of publishing content on social media. When it comes to the translating tools, the receptionist from Campsite A uses Google Translate, Yandex, and Glosbe, while the worker from Campsite B uses only Google Translate and does not know which other tools exist that could aid her in reaching a mutual understanding with clients. The employee from Hotel A said that there are no digital used, and the employee from Hotel B said that the tools were used very rarely and did not reveal which those are.

### 6.3. Enterprises' policies towards encouragement of multilingualism

A question was given to all respondents about their opinion of the importance of multilingualism nowadays. All responses were positive as it is to be seen below:

cmpA	i think that we a:::re making a very big	
	community between other countries a:::nd (.)	
	everyone is acquired to speak another	
	language to be able to communicate with each	
	other (.) especially in tourism for example	
	(.) because english is kind of passing on	
	and i think some new languages are::: (.)	
	being (.) >are< replacing it (.) so we should	
	learn a bit more (.) because it is easier to	
	con=connect with other people	

cmpB	i think that multilingual people have a lots	
	of <u>advantages</u> (.) a::: for example (.) making	

	a friendships with other people (.)	
	commu=communicate they m::: they they have a	
	(.) opportunity to communicate with other	
	people a:::nd i don't know (.) maybe to (.)	
	visit other countries because they are (.) in	
	position to <u>know</u> lots of languages	smiles

hotA	but it's not important it's necessary .	
	because of the whole globalization and so on	
	at least you have to know (.) two languages	
	english is one of them (.) and yet there's	
	small language is just (.) something that you	
	will give you more opportunities in life and	
	maybe a mo:::re satisfactory life (.)	

hotB	a::: (.) i would i would agree with that term	
	(0.2) especially when we are talking about	
	business (.) now when (0.3) the more	
	languages you know the better options you are	
	having in the future for example to get a job	
	to (0.3) (nisi) to get a job to::: (.) to	
	have a brighter future so ↑	

It is visible from Table 6 why every informant believes that multilingualism is immensely relevant. There is a variety of different languages that respondents encounter in their professional life. In case of the campsites, most clients come from two countries, but Hotel A and B encounter more diverse linguistic diversity:

	Campsite A	Campsite B	Hotel A	Hotel B
Languages of the clients	English, Polish, Slovenian, Italian, French, German, Russian	English, Italian, Hungarian, German	Croatian, German, English, French, Italian	Croatian, English, Italian, German
Country of the majority of customers	Germany, Austria	Germany, Hungary	Germany, Austria, all parts of the world	Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea

Table 6. Overview of linguistic varieties encountered in the enterprises

It is important to note that, despite the fact that Hotel B targets the east Asian market, they do not look specifically for multilingual staff, according to the informant hotB. The need for



multilingual staff is also not expressed by Campsite B. On the other hand, Campsite A and Hotel A do rely on multilingual workers. However, none of the companies encourages learning a new language by offering language courses and seminars or by paying higher salaries. As far as language policy is concerned, all companies advise their employees to adjust to the customer's native language whenever possible. In Campsite A English and Croatian are spoken among the staff, while workers in Campsite B and Hotel B use only the Croatian language. According to informant hotA, among the staff can be heard various languages because the first language of employees is not exclusively Croatian. There are also foreign workers employed in the hotel.

Interviewees were also asked to give their opinion about the future of tourism in the region. The receptionist from Campsite A strongly believes in further development of tourism in the region of Zadar, while cmpB was rather uncertain about what future holds and did not want to make any assumptions regarding the subject. The opinion of the informant hotA is not very optimistic. He states that not only tourism in region of Zadar, but in whole Croatia will change because the country became a part of the European Union, and it is strongly influencing it. Worker in Hotel B believes that the future of the Croatian tourism lies in the hands of the Ministry of Tourism, and that the industry is currently going in wrong direction since the tourism enterprises mostly do not offer a quality equal to the amount of money asked for it. He said that the good positioning on the global market is necessary and mass tourism in Croatia needs to be avoided.

#### 6.4. E-mail use

In case of both campsites, workers at reception do not have access to e-mails or make reservations. In Hotel A and B there is a booking department, or a reservation center, which processes reservations. Both employees have gained some experience in answering e-mails in their respective companies. Table 7 shows different methods of booking an accommodation in observed tourism enterprises.

Campsite A	E-mail, official website, on-site, booking sites (Booking.com)
Campsite B	E-mail, official website, booking sites (Booking.com)

Hotel A	E-mail, official website, booking sites (Booking.com, Airbnb), phone, tourist agencies
Hotel B	E-mail, official website, on-site, booking sites

Table 7. Booking possibilities at the tourism companies

There are differences in language used when making reservations as it is visible from Table 8.

Campsite A	English, German
Campsite B	English
Hotel A	Whichever language the client uses
Hotel B	English, Croatian, German, Italian

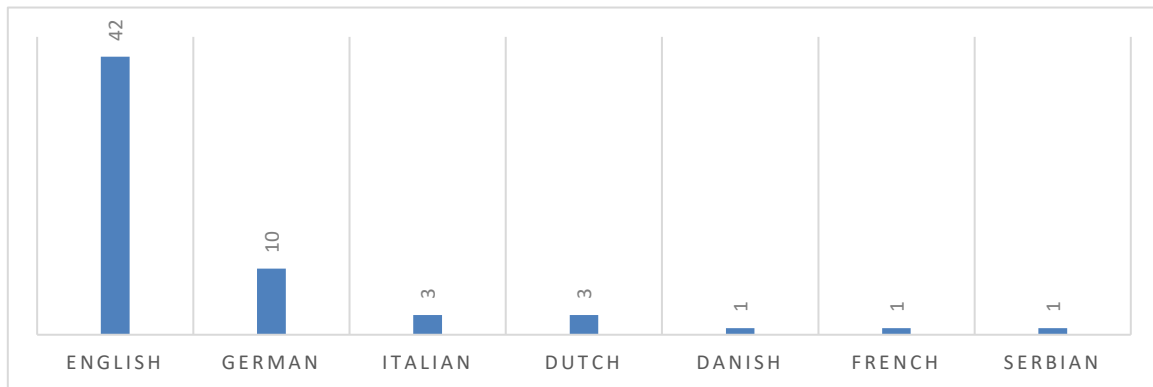
Table 8. Languages in which reservations are processed by tourism companies

Surprisingly, according to the informant working in Campsite B, the company makes reservations only in English. Multilingual approach used in publishing content on social media and giving information on the official website is clearly not chosen in case of reservations. From the table, it could be stated that Hotel A is the most adaptive to the linguistic challenges, but the informant explained that the process of booking an accommodation consists of a short inquiry sent by clients and a template of a confirmation form used by all booking agents. Therefore, the response to customers is a template whose primary goal is to inform them about the offer, not to communicate with them. Hotel B language use in making reservations corresponds to the languages displayed on the official webpage, and therefore, the consistency in language choice is evident.

## 7. Tripadvisor analysis

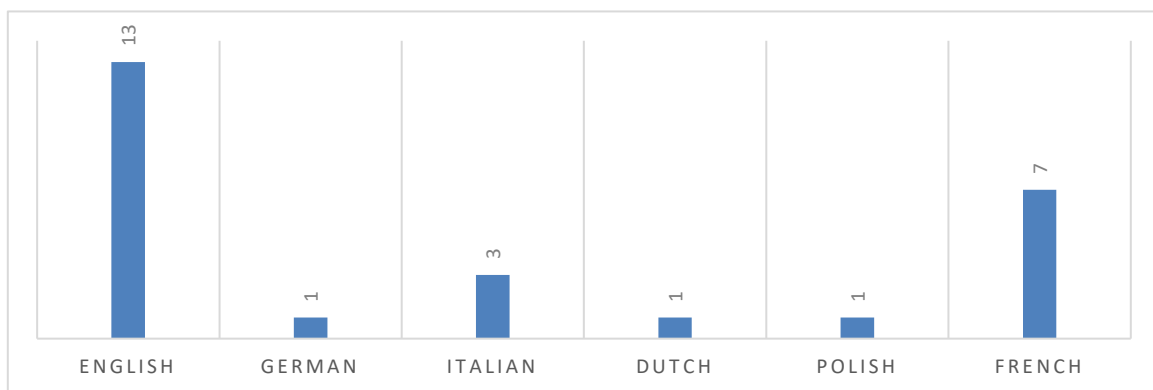
Tripadvisor is a platform on which customers have the possibility to leave their impressions and thoughts of the provided service during their stay at accommodation facilities. Tripadvisor has been the subject of various papers, and Ma and Kirilenko (2021) reached the conclusion that the digital platform is, indeed, a credible provider of data regarding tourism visits. As mentioned earlier, evaluations contribute to the decision-making process of potential visitors and as such are essential for studied enterprises.

Campsite A has 61 reviews and a score of 5.0 or “excellent”. There are 56 reviews with the highest note, two with “very good”, only one with “average”, and two with “poor”. The reviews are written in seven languages and their distribution is shown on the following graph:



Graph 9. Language distribution of reviews about Campsite A on Tripadvisor

On Tripadvisor, there are 27 reviews of Campsite B with which it reached a score of 3.5 or “very good”. The tourism enterprise has the smallest number of entries on the platform if compared to the other objects. Eight reviews graded the campsite as “excellent”, five people experienced it as “very good”, ten as “average”, three visitors view it as “poor” and one as “terrible”. The language of reviews is shown in Graph 10.

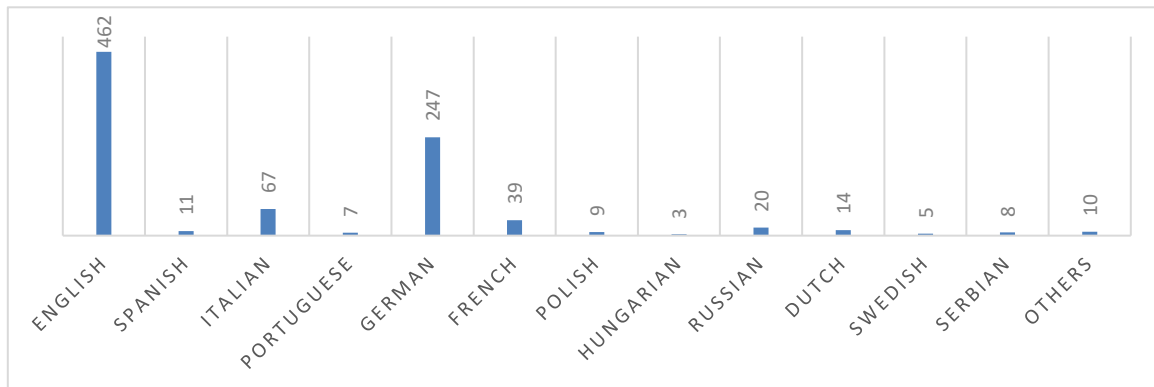


Graph 10. Language distribution of reviews about Campsite B on Tripadvisor

There are six reviews about the hospitality of staff from June 2015 until June 2022 and the only one that was negative was about the low knowledge of the English language.

Hotel A is reviewed the most with 899 feedbacks but takes the second place by the rating score, which is 4.5 and, therefore, belongs to the category “excellent”. There are 612 reviews graded

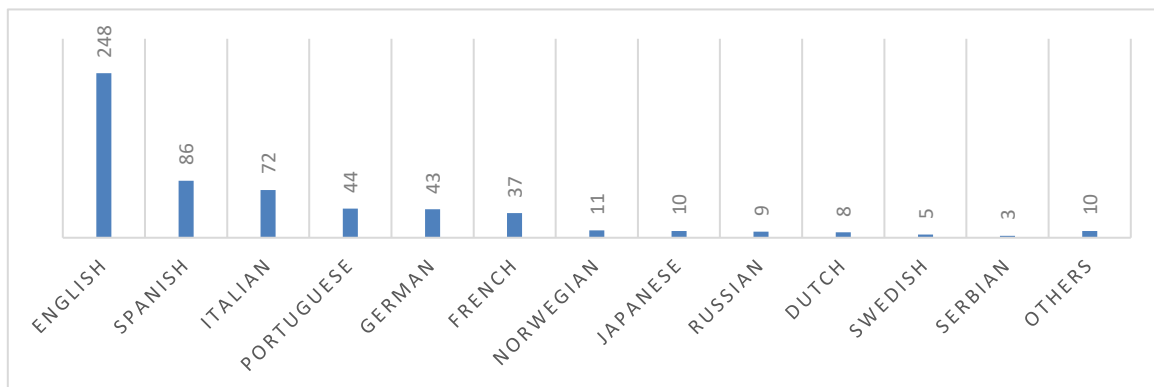
with “excellent”, 170 with “very good” and 78 with “average”. 22 ratings are “poor” and 17 “terrible”. Opinion about the tourism enterprise is written in 19 languages:



Graph 11. Language distribution of reviews about Hotel A on Tripadvisor

To the last category belong Czech, Norwegian, and Slovak with two reviews each. Only one review is left in Danish, Japanese, Turkish, and Korean.

Hotel B was reviewed on the platform 584 times and rated with 3.0 or “average”. The highest grade “excellent” was given by 52 clients, rated with “very good” 182 and “average” 224 times. 86 visitors think that their stay was “poor” and 40 rated it as “terrible”. The hotel was rated in 18 diverse languages which are shown on the following graph:



Graph 12. Language distribution of reviews about Hotel B on Tripadvisor

Other languages with two reviews are Korean, Polish, Slovak, and Chinese. Danish and Turkish had one review each. Such high diversity of languages suggests that the tourism enterprise needs workers with good intercultural skills, but the insight from the informant hotB claimed the opposite.

According to the responses given during the interviews, there are different approaches dealing with customers' feedback. In Campsite A and B the manager keeps track of comments on social media and Tripadvisor. In case of Hotel B that duty falls on the manager of marketing. In Hotel A someone from the marketing department or the hotel director is reading comments. Thus, it can be stated that all companies are aware of the importance of customers' experience. Employee from Hotel B even stated that the negative comments are more contributing to the company than the positive ones:

hotB	i think both of it is very important (.)	
	because (.) a the positive feedback is always	
	(0.2) it's always a good thing (.) a:::	
	because as a company you know you're doing	
	you're doing you're providing good service	
	and that you are really that you're rewarded	
	from that (.) your (.) hard work is pa-paying	
	of (.) a::: (.) negative (.) feedback	
	negative comments are (.) i would say even	
	better than the positive because a::: (0.2)	
	the:::y give you they a company a::: (0.3) a	
	<u>direction</u> (.) where they need to go (.) and	
	a::: which which problem problems they need	
	to solve and what they need to do to offer	
	the plans of the the ↓ service	

His statement is, indeed, persuasive. No improvement can be reached unless the management is aware of existing shortcomings in the firm. Therefore, it is advisable that the companies keep an eye on the satisfaction of the former customers. Not only to avoid negative reviews in the future and damage to the firm's public image, but to also improve the service in any way possible.

## 8. Discussion

Observation of the official web pages of four selected tourism enterprises in the region of Zadar uncovered that all companies use at least one foreign language to present themselves to the public. Campsite A had the biggest linguistic diversity with information about the enterprise displayed in nine foreign languages (English, German, Italian, French, Dutch, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, and Slovenian). On one hand, Campsite A and Hotel A chose to add three foreign

languages (English, German, and Italian), while on other hand, Hotel B displayed only English. Motivation for their choice of language may be found in the responses of informants and reviews on Tripadvisor. To speak English has, indeed, become a necessity in tourism, and most reviews are written in English. Both interviewees mentioned that the majority of visitors come from Germany and Austria, which is why the German language is a requirement. In both cases, English was the most frequently used language for writing reviews, followed by German. Three of the respondents studied Italian in school. Due to historical reasons and the proximity to Italy, it is still an advantage to know this language. It can be stated that this combination of foreign languages is a necessity for this touristic region. The multilingual self-representation is, indeed, significant for selected enterprises. Furthermore, the language of reviews corresponds to the languages displayed on the official webpage. However, the Croatian language is neglected in this aspect and there are no options to select reviews written in Croatian. From the gathered evidence it is visible that English is placed side by side with the official language of the country. In all cases except for Hotel B, German and Italian are a shared characteristic of companies' multilingual digital identity. Regarding the importance of social media, it can be presumed that all companies are aware of how extensive their impact on the potential clients is. Not only did the companies choose to link their accounts on different social media platforms to their official websites, but they also publish content in various foreign languages. Worth highlighting is the fact that the variation in popularity of social networks is visible from the study. Even though three companies still have an account on Twitter, with Hotel A being a slightly difference case, the companies simply stopped publishing content on it. It is also of importance that the diversity of languages is not as striking as on other social media platforms. The data imply that English is dominant in the case of campsite A and almost half as prominent compared to Croatian in the case of campsite B. Unfortunately, once again Hotel A does not have a specific account, but the information about it can be found on the corporate account.

All informants expressed that being online is a good business strategy. Important to note is that, according to the responses from interviews, Campsite A and Hotel B have the most benefits of being present on Facebook. An informant from Campsite B did not know which social media platforms the company uses, but this is not surprising. The informant has the least experience of all informants included in the study and has worked only for one summer at the reception. The respondent from Hotel A, however, claims that neither Facebook nor Instagram is as successful in reaching the target audience as the official website. His insight is very valuable since he also explained that social media do not result in as much success as its official website.

As the main factor for this circumstance, he brought up the strong financial background of the clients. Since Hotel A is the most luxurious tourism enterprise which surpasses other subjects of the study, it is to be expected that the digital strategy will differentiate. The responses reveal that all companies saw advantages of being active on social media, even the one which is aware that social media is not the most fruitful method. This means that despite the existence of differences when it comes to being present on social media, tourism enterprises are more or less active on them.

A part of the study is also directed towards multilingual competence and practices of the staff working at the reception. Since they are representatives of the companies and in daily contact with the customers, their knowledge of languages is a good indicator of multilingual repertoires in the region of Zadar. All employees are proficient in English. The employee from Campsite B does not speak German which makes Italian the second most spoken foreign language, followed by German which is a known language to other employees. They all shared a positive view on the importance of multilingualism and their multilingual repertoires reveal the truthfulness of their statements. Furthermore, their professional surrounding is, indeed, multilingual since they all listed at least three different languages in which clients communicate with them. Interestingly, both campsites attract mostly clients that speak German. The same can be stated for Hotel A since the informant firstly mentioned Germany and Austria. However, he also added that the hotel greets visitors from all over the world. The aimed market in the case of Hotel B is East Asia. Therefore, just from the example of these four tourism enterprises, it is visible how much of an impact Croatian tourism has on the global market. Despite the geographical distance, visitors from that area are ready to travel to Croatia. Another peculiarity is that the informant hotB did not list any of the languages spoken in the targeted market as languages that he encountered in his professional setting. Nevertheless, he did mention that there is always a travel guide who accompanies the groups from the mentioned area. The travel guide serves as a medium between the receptionist and the visitors. This is an example that the path to mutual understanding does not need to be accomplished through a shared language of a receptionist and a client or aided with digital tools.

As far as the findings on the use of e-mails are concerned, only workers in hotels had access to it and are familiar with it. Responding to incoming e-mail is, however, within the scope of responsibilities of reservations centers in each enterprise. At campsites managers oversee it. After all, campsites are smaller than hotels and the need for an additional staff may not be

needed. Important to note is that all respondents believe that being polite is a necessity in e-mail correspondence. Lack of language knowledge is overcome with the use of various digital tools. E-mail is not the only possibility of booking accommodation. Apart from it, all companies enable making reservations on the official website and through other booking platforms called Booking.com, and Hotel A has an additional offer through Airbnb. From the comments on Tripadvisor, it is to be concluded that the observed enterprises experience contacts with diverse cultures.

It would be expected that because of cultural and language diversity the enterprises would look for multilingual staff, but according to the informants cmpB and hotB, that is not the case. Being multilingual is not decisive, but both respondents said that they needed to demonstrate their knowledge of foreign languages during the job interviews. Campsite A and Hotel A require multilingual staff. Clearly the type of the tourism enterprises does not play a key role in these aspects. Hotel A does, indeed, distinguish itself from other enterprises because it has more stars, employees, and higher prices. On the other hand, Campsite A has smaller area and has less employees than Campsite B. Even more intriguing is that the official website of Campsite B is noted to be the most linguistically diverse, but judging by the social media content, Campsite A is clearly in the lead with the highest number of languages. Two of four enterprises demand that the reception staff speaks foreign languages, but surprisingly, just as other two companies, they do not encourage learning an additional language by offering a salary raise or paid language courses. This can be tracked to the previously mentioned situation with seasonal workers in Croatia. Perhaps the enterprises do not see a necessity to invest in linguistic skills of their workers, but over the last few years Croatia is facing difficulties with finding a workforce during the summer months. It would be interesting to repeat and expand the research in a few years, studying a larger number of tourism enterprises in the Zadar region.

## 9. Conclusion

The results confirm that multilingualism is an essential element of the chosen tourism enterprises. A great linguistic diversity can be detected in only four examples included in the study. In fact, all tourism enterprises have official websites that include at least one foreign language, with Camping B excelling with a total of nine languages.



The significance of social media platforms in the tourism industry is also acknowledged, as all companies operate on them. The strategy of advertising and communication on social media channels varies. First, Hotel B chose a bilingual approach by publishing posts on Facebook and Instagram in Croatian and English. It is crucial to stress that the last posts were published in December last year, making it the least active. Secondly, Hotel A decided to share its Facebook and Instagram accounts with other hotels in the Zadar region. The data from the joint account is not included in the study, and therefore the company had only one post on Facebook in Croatian. Third, diverse foreign languages were found at the two campsites. Campsite A convincingly ranked first in terms of multilingual content, displaying twice as many languages on Facebook than Campsite B. Although Campsite A used eight different languages in postings on Facebook, a total of five languages were found on its Instagram account. Nevertheless, the data collected indicate a strong presence of multilingual language choices on both websites and social media channels.

From the interviewees' perceptions of the language varieties they encounter in their professional environments and the countries that are their target audiences, the need for multilingual repertoires among workers is clear. All companies receive visitors from Europe, but the example of Hotel B shows that Croatian tourism extends beyond European borders. Hotel B's business activities deliberately target travelers from East Asia.

An interesting finding was the management's need for multilingual staff. Although it might be assumed that all businesses require foreign language skills, this proved to be true in the cases of Campsite A and Hotel A. The informant stated that mutual understanding between the reception staff and the travelers is achieved through a third party - a guide who accompanies the arriving tourist groups.

The richness of available languages on the official website of campsite B could lead to the conclusion that the campsite benefits to a large extent from random travelers who need accommodation because they have not made a reservation in advance. Therefore, the information is written in as many languages as possible to appear more attractive to passersby.

While Hotel A insists that staff rely on their multilingualism and do not use digital tools, Campsite B's informant uses Google Translate. More importantly, she states that she does not know if there are other tools that could help her with misunderstandings. In addition, she is the only one who does not know what social media the company uses. Since she has only been

working at the campsite for one season, her lack of knowledge is to be anticipated. The campsite does not have employees year-round, only in the summer. Perhaps this is the reason why the multilingual requirements for workers are low.

Twitter was not used at all by Hotel B, and all other companies were no longer active there. This shows that tourism enterprises have abandoned a social medium because they presumably saw that the target market was not being reached. It doesn't make sense to waste valuable time and resources on publishing content that potential visitors won't notice.

Regarding multilingualism, the interviewee from campsite B speaks two foreign languages, the others three. Only the interviewees from the hotels had shared their experience of communication through emails, which were handled in foreign languages. The receptionists from the campsites did not have access to email correspondence, but both indicated that the manager responded to incoming requests, and usually in English.

Unexpectedly, despite the obvious need for multilingualism, learning an additional language is neither encouraged nor rewarded by management. One could say that the current situation is rather ironic, as investment in multilingual skills would lead to an overall increase in service quality and thus customer satisfaction. As for the data on satisfaction of former customers, according to Tripadvisor, Campsite A and Hotel A proved to be "excellent", followed by Campsite B with "very good" and Hotel B with "average". The insistence on good intercultural and multilingual communication in Hotel A could be a factor that contributed to such a high score, and the frequent activity of the manager of Campsite A on social media clearly shows that he tries and strives to keep customers well informed.

Consequently, it can be concluded that English is indeed the dominant foreign language present in all segments of tourism businesses investigated. However, the occurrence of other languages should not be neglected. The four tourism companies are an example of how intense cultural and linguistic contact can be. Croatian tourism could take advantage of this knowledge and adapt its digital communication strategies to the broader, linguistically diverse market, as well as encourage its employees to learn more new languages.

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**Appendix A**  
**Interview protocol**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time, started at: \_\_\_\_\_ / ended at: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Informant: \_\_\_\_\_

- What does digital communication and language practice look like within the informant's company?

**(1) Language biography:**

1. Can you tell me where did you grow up and where you live now?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your first language (mother tongue)?
4. How many languages do you speak and how did you acquire them?
5. How well is your knowledge of these languages? Could you evaluate your proficiency in each language?
6. Do you plan to learn another foreign language in the future?
7. What is your stance regarding the claim that multilingualism is nowadays immensely important? In case of agreement with the statement, can you name a few advantages that multilingual people have? Whether at work or in other areas of life.

**(2) Education and professional path:**

1. What are you by profession and where do you currently work?
2. How many years have you worked in the tourism industry? Can you describe your professional path since the very beginning until today?
3. What were the reasons or circumstances that made you apply for a job in the company?
4. How long have you been working in the company and when was it established?
5. How many employees are there in the company you are currently working?
6. Can you briefly describe your duties/tasks at the workplace? How does your daily schedule look like?

7. Are there occasions in which you must take over the work of another person? Can you briefly explain these occasions? Do they happen often or rarely?

**(3) Use of foreign languages at work:**

1. Are you working alone or are there other colleagues with the same job?
2. In what languages do you communicate with your colleagues and/or managers?
3. Are there any policies regarding language use among the staff? Do you need to use a certain language or perhaps the standard Croatian language?
4. Can you tell me what languages you encounter in your professional life? What are the most spoken languages in the workplace?
5. In your opinion, where does the majority of clients come from? What is their nationality?
6. Did you maybe have problems with the tourists if they spoke a language that you do not speak? How do you resolve misunderstandings?
7. Do people who have the knowledge of languages that customers speak have a better chance to work at the reception?

**(4) Digital communication:**

1. Can you tell me how many people are working in the booking department and in which languages the reservations are processed?
2. Are reservations made via e-mail? Is there an option to book an accommodation directly on-site or via another booking website? (e.g., Airbnb, Booking)
3. When answering e-mail are there any rules that must be followed? Did the management give workers some guidelines or directions on how to reply and which language to use?
4. When you get an inquiry do you/your colleagues reply in the same language? What is the procedure if no one speaks the language?
5. Are there any digital or translating tools that employees use?
6. On the official webpage of the company information for the clients is displayed in ... different languages. Do you know what those languages are?

7. Do you know what social media channels the company uses and who is in charge of publishing content on them?
8. On the website there is a phone number displayed. Who is in charge of answering the phone?
9. Do you believe that the company's presence online is a good strategy? Please explain why.
10. What social media used by your company reaches the most clients in your opinion?

**(5) Importance of reviews:**

1. Are reviews and comments of former clients important in the tourism industry? Why?
2. Is there an employee in charge of reading comments on Tripadvisor or social media channels?
3. Are there cases where past clients complain about the service? Do these situations occur via phone, e-mail, social media or in person?
4. What is the general response to a customer's complaint?

**(6) Company's attitude towards multilingualism:**

1. During your interview for the job were you asked to list the languages you know?
2. Does the company look for multilingual staff, or is the knowledge of Croatian sufficient to work as the reception?
3. Are there any salary differences when it comes to the number of languages that an employee speaks?
4. Does your company promote learning a new language by offering paid courses or seminars?
5. Are there any other forms of rewards for workers who manage to acquire a new language?
6. What is the future of tourism enterprises in the region of Zadar in your opinion? Do you believe that the tourism industry will continue to develop?



## Appendix B

### Transcription symbols

Key symbols:

Convention	Name	Use
[ text ]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.
(# of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or ↓	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
? or ↑	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch or intonation.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
!-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Greater than/Less than Symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Greater than/Less than Symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more

		slowly than usual for the speaker.
◦	Degree Symbol	Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized Text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
<u>underline</u>	Underlined Text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
• or (.hhh)	High Dot	Audible Inhalation
( text )	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
<u><i>italic text</i></u> <sup>[+]</sup>	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.
cmpA		Respondent from Campsite A
cmpB		Respondent from Campsite B
hotA		Respondent from Hotel A
hotB		Respondent from Hotel B