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Adapting and Promoting Tourism for Children in Venice and the Lagoon Islands: A Comparative Analysis of Food-Related Discourse Strategies in English and in Italian

Cover Page Footnote

This study is one of the outcomes of the SPIN2023 Project “Food-Related Communication for Children in English: A Multimodal and Socio-Cultural Investigation” (FoRCCE), a two-year project funded by “Ca’ Foscari” University of Venice.

Adapting and Promoting Tourism for Children in Venice and the Lagoon Islands: A Comparative Analysis of Food-Related Discourse Strategies in English and in Italian

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According to the latest available version of the *Annual Tourism Survey* drafted by the City of Venice, in 2023, 12,628,079 tourists visited Venice and the Lagoon Islands (Bettiol & Marini, 2025). This survey does not provide data on the age groups of these visitors, but they are available in the previous version of the same *Survey* (Bianchetto & Marini, 2022), which reports that 29% of tourists were in the 46-71 age group. Therefore, we can presume that, excluding the older age groups, quite a large proportion of visitors is likely composed of young tourists and families with children. This study focuses on this specific category of visitors by investigating the websites of local institutions and tour operators that explicitly address their promotional message to children and their families. To do so, the research conducts a comparative Discourse Analysis on six websites (i.e., *Kids in Venice*, *Venezia Unica*, *Venice Kids Tours*, *Vivo Venetia*, *Veneto for Kids* and *ViaggiaPiccoli*) that present the tourist offer of Venice and the Lagoon Islands in English and / or in Italian to national and international prospective young visitors. The aim of the study is to investigate how local tourist institutions and private organisations / tour operators promote and transmit the local traditional culture, with specific attention paid to enogastronomic aspects, to both domestic and foreign younger generations of visitors as a means towards preserving the local culture that is constantly endangered by depopulation and globalisation (Zanini, 2017).

Key Words: tourism discourse, food related communication to children, Venice, Venetian Lagoon Islands, Discourse Analysis, English Language, Italian Language, adaptation

Introduction¹

Venice is one of the top tourist destinations for Italian and international visitors. The City of Venice's *Annual Tourism Survey* reports that, in 2023, more than 12 million tourists visited Venice and the so-called Lagoon Islands, namely, Murano, Burano, Torcello and the island of Sant'Erasmo (Bettiol & Marini, 2025). This figure carries significant implications for local tourism, affecting both hospitality capacity and the communicative strategies required for the effective promotion of the area to prospective tourists. Previous research has established the importance of using appropriate promotional strategies when marketing Venice and the Veneto region (Cesiri, 2017, 2019, 2021; Cesiri & Peruzzo, 2025). These discursive approaches are essential for conveying the area's complexities and

unique peculiarities to tourists prior to their visit. The results of previous research, however, have focused on digital and online materials mostly aimed at a general audience with no differentiations in terms of age groups.

The present research examines a specific group of websites promoting Venice and the Lagoon Islands to children and their families in English and / or in Italian. To do so, the study conducts a comparative Discourse Analysis on six websites (i.e., *Kids in Venice*, *Venezia Unica*, *Venice Kids Tours*, *Vivo Venetia*, *Veneto for Kids*, *ViaggiaPiccoli*) in English and / or in Italian, to national and international prospective young visitors. This contribution investigates how local institutions and private tour operators promote traditional culture, more specifically food-related traditions, to young Italian and international visitors. In particular, it explores these efforts as a strategy to preserve a local heritage, currently threatened by depopulation and globalisation (Zanini, 2017).

¹ This study is one of the outcomes of the SPIN2023 Project 'Food-Related Communication for Children in English: A Multimodal and Socio-Cultural Investigation' (FoRCCE), a two-year project funded by 'Ca' Foscari' University of Venice.

predominantly visit the *Città Storica* (historic city), which includes the islands of Venice, Murano, Burano, Torcello, Sant'Erasmus, and Giudecca. Other tourists visit the Lagoon Islands, including Lido and Pellestrina (see Figure 1). Because the *Terraferma* (mainland) does not consist of islands, its specific data were excluded from this study.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the diverse geographical origins of these tourists – including European and extra-European countries – significantly impact communicative strategies. To be persuasive, promotional tourism discourse must align with the audience's cognitive frameworks and value systems (de Mooij, 2019). Given this diversity, communication cannot be tailored to a single national culture; consequently, English is utilised as a global *lingua franca* to reach this heterogeneous international audience.

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A map of Italy showing its regional divisions. The Liguria region, located in the northwest along the coast, is highlighted in red. The rest of Italy is shown in light yellow, and surrounding countries and the sea are in light grey and light blue respectively.



Sources - Left: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Venice#/media/File:Venezia_in_Italy.svg
Top Right: World Guides, Bottom Right:

Figure 2. Nationalities of visitors (Venice, Lido and other Lagoon Islands)

Paese di Provenienza	Alberghiero		Complementare		Totale strutture	
	Arrivi	Presenze	Arrivi	Presenze	Arrivi	Presenze
Austria	60.423	137.953	41.805	106.021	102.228	243.974
Belgio	31.189	75.743	23.330	65.530	54.519	141.273
Croazia	13.593	21.941	7.231	15.420	20.824	37.361
Danimarca	12.067	30.025	11.616	33.647	23.683	63.672
Finlandia	10.322	22.830	8.910	21.390	19.232	44.220
Francia	196.510	512.836	179.290	558.901	375.800	1.071.737
Germania	148.786	391.762	164.177	492.946	312.963	884.708
Grecia	23.429	51.602	12.184	32.582	35.613	84.184
Irlanda	26.350	63.621	20.642	53.669	46.992	117.290
Islanda	1.483	3.123	934	2.470	2.417	5.593
Lussemburgo	2.437	6.229	1.565	4.375	4.002	10.604
Norvegia	12.025	27.933	8.687	22.781	20.712	50.714
Paesi bassi	30.507	61.857	30.638	81.303	61.145	143.160
Polonia	58.592	123.704	65.252	167.712	123.844	291.416
Portogallo	28.611	59.729	16.900	39.068	45.511	98.797
Gran Bretagna	215.528	565.550	136.510	383.442	352.038	948.992
Repubblica Ceca	17.335	36.020	21.935	51.933	39.270	87.953
Russia	26.935	53.346	18.854	45.310	45.789	98.656
Slovacchia	6.750	13.641	6.262	14.259	13.012	27.900
Slovenia	8.616	13.291	6.238	11.227	14.854	24.518
Spagna	166.124	329.749	108.212	259.314	274.336	589.063
Svezia	16.169	33.908	11.877	27.218	28.046	61.126
Svizzera-Liecht.	43.728	105.459	33.744	94.826	77.472	200.285
Turchia	31.785	51.568	18.286	40.442	50.071	92.010
Ungheria	16.303	32.843	14.766	34.197	31.069	67.040
Bulgaria	9.804	21.633	8.362	24.128	18.166	45.761
Romania	44.695	106.269	33.507	93.774	78.202	200.043
Estonia	4.997	10.893	5.460	14.315	10.457	25.208
Cipro	2.934	6.595	1.988	4.895	4.922	11.490
Lituania	7.748	16.265	8.130	19.628	15.878	35.893
Lettonia	4.950	10.069	5.600	14.032	10.550	24.101
Malta	2.232	5.276	1.483	3.748	3.715	9.024
Ucraina	28.348	50.898	26.181	59.081	54.529	109.979
Altri Paesi Europa ¹	27.342	49.773	16.947	39.187	44.289	88.960
ITALIA	513.746	925.887	274.402	770.917	788.148	1.696.804
TOTALE EUROPA Inclusa Italia	1.852.393	4.029.821	1.351.905	3.703.688	3.204.298	7.733.509
TOTALE EUROPA Esclusa Italia	1.338.647	3.103.934	1.077.503	2.932.771	2.416.150	6.036.705
Altri Paesi extra Europa	1.613.860	2.993.569	846.453	1.901.001	2.460.313	4.894.570
TOTALE COMPLESSIVO	3.466.253	7.023.390	2.198.358	5.604.689	5.664.611	12.628.079

Paese di provenienza	Alberghiero		Complementare		Tot. Strutture	
	Arrivi	Presenze	Arrivi	Presenze	Arrivi	Presenze
U.S.A.	673.373	1.386.538	324.554	773.856	997.927	2.160.394
Canada	86.587	174.264	65.128	156.282	151.715	330.546
Messico	90.832	128.567	34.616	62.082	125.448	190.649
Brasile	82.589	159.437	38.327	81.524	120.916	240.961
Argentina	38.282	69.535	24.147	49.957	62.429	119.492
Venezuela	3.828	6.454	2.319	4.545	6.147	10.999
Altri America ¹	84.959	131.309	51.784	101.420	136.743	232.729
TOTALE	1.060.450	2.056.104	540.875	1.229.666	1.601.325	3.285.770
Corea del Sud	96.321	131.212	31.081	63.377	127.402	194.589
Cina	84.172	124.621	34.367	66.696	118.539	191.317
Giappone	57.154	88.837	15.785	32.644	72.939	121.481
India	35.502	61.249	25.306	48.603	60.808	109.852
Altri Paesi Asia ¹	96.939	156.539	49.106	110.360	146.045	266.899
TOTALE ASIA	370.088	562.458	155.645	321.680	525.733	884.138
Israele	23.963	46.236	20.596	43.203	44.559	89.439
Altri Paesi Asia Occidentale ¹	39.005	70.832	18.982	41.113	57.987	111.945
TOTALE ASIA Occidentale	62.968	117.068	39.578	84.316	102.546	201.384
Sud Africa	7.421	14.789	5.141	11.614	12.562	26.403
Egitto	3.128	7.781	2.180	5.762	5.308	13.543
Altri Paesi Africa Mediterr. ¹	10.268	21.842	6.319	16.063	16.587	37.905
Altri Paesi Africa ¹	7.742	17.023	4.134	13.287	11.876	30.310
TOTALE AFRICA	28.559	61.435	17.774	46.726	46.333	108.161
Australia	81.088	174.324	79.061	188.348	160.149	362.672
Nuova Zelanda	9.894	20.517	12.882	28.842	22.776	49.359
TOTALE OCEANIA	90.982	194.841	91.943	217.190	182.925	412.031
Altri Paesi Extraeuropei ¹	813	1.663	638	1.423	1.451	3.086
TOTALE GENERALE EXTRAEUROPEA	1.613.860	2.993.569	846.453	1.901.001	2.460.313	4.894.570
Totale Europa	1.852.393	4.029.821	1.351.905	3.703.688	3.204.298	7.733.509
Totale complessivo	3.466.253	7.023.390	2.198.358	5.604.689	5.664.611	12.628.079

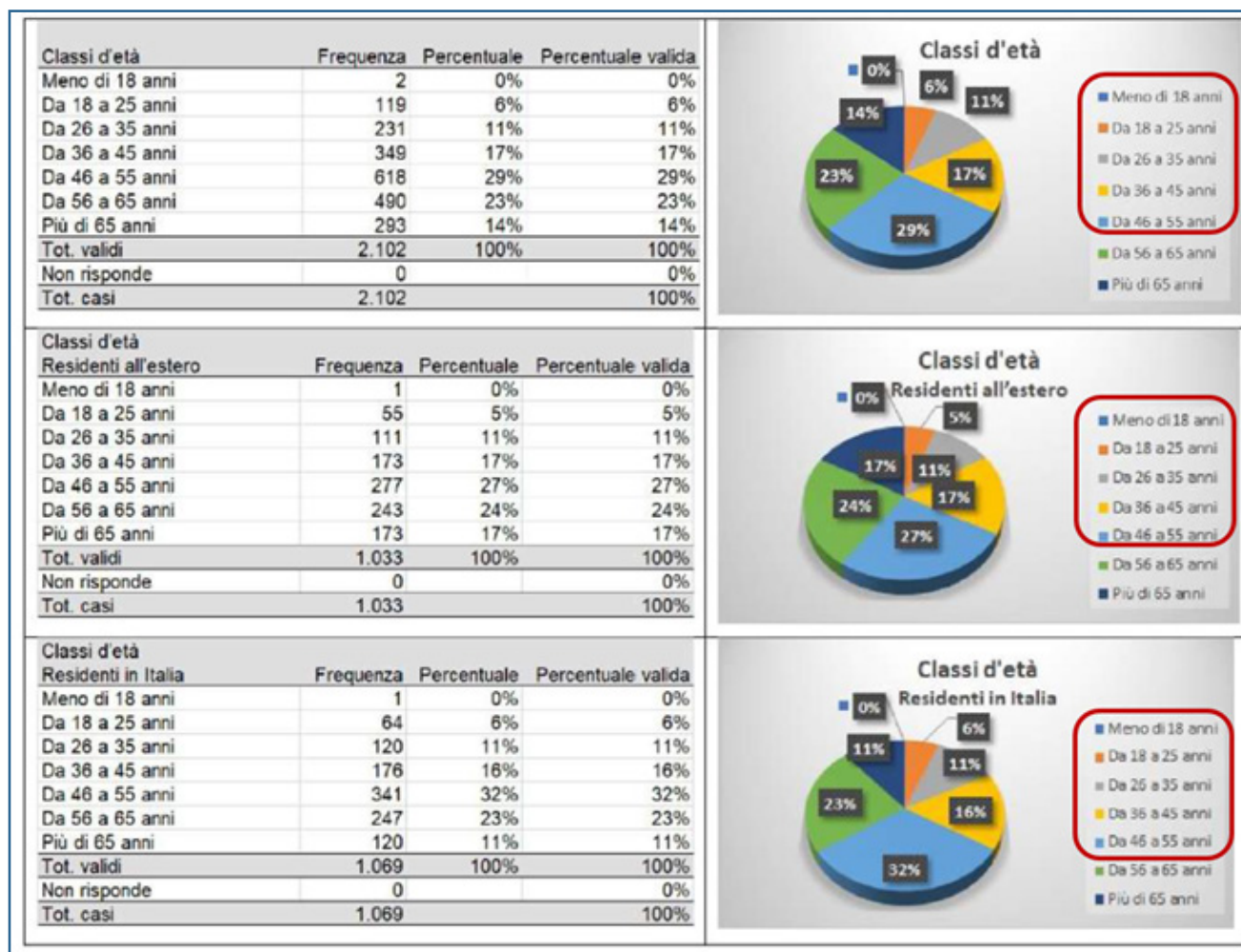
Paesi	Arrivi	% su tot.	Presenze	% su tot.	Perm. media
U.S.A.	997.927	17,6%	2.160.394	17,1%	2,16
Francia	375.800	6,6%	1.071.737	8,5%	2,85
Gran Bretagna	352.038	6,2%	948.992	7,5%	2,70
Germania	312.963	5,5%	884.708	7,0%	2,83
Spagna	274.336	4,8%	589.063	4,7%	2,15
Australia	160.149	2,8%	362.672	2,9%	2,26
Canada	151.715	2,7%	330.546	2,6%	2,18
Corea del Sud	127.402	2,2%	194.589	1,5%	1,53
Messico	125.448	2,2%	190.649	1,5%	1,52
Polonia	123.844	2,2%	291.416	2,3%	2,35
Brasile	120.916	2,1%	240.961	1,9%	1,99
Cina	118.539	2,1%	191.317	1,5%	1,61
Totale TOP 12 stranieri	3.241.077	57,2%	7.457.044	59,1%	2,30
Totale altri paesi stranieri	1.635.386	28,9%	3.474.231	27,5%	2,12
Totale italiani	788.148	13,9%	1.696.804	13,4%	2,15
TOTALE	5.664.611	100,0%	12.628.079	100,0%	2,23

(Bettiol & Marini, 2025: 55-57)

To identify materials addressing specific target segments, this investigation examined tourist demographics, specifically focusing on age, a factor overlooked in prior research (see next section). Although the 2023 Annual Tourism Survey drafted by the City of Venice lacks detailed demographic breakdown, the 2020 version (Bianchetto & Marini, 2022) provides a ‘visitor profile’ based on online questionnaires from the VeneziaUnica website. This platform, analysed in Section 3, allows visitors to purchase transport and attraction tickets.

Analysis of these age groups (Figure 3) reveals that, regardless of their origin, a substantial portion of tourists visiting Venice and the Lagoon Islands fall into categories likely to be accompanied by children, which accounts for the present focus on children as a specific visitor category. The study examines how digital materials are adapted for this demographic, comparing results with previous investigations of websites targeting tourists in general. This approach ensures a deeper understanding of how institutional tourism discourse balances global reach with age-specific engagement strategies within the Venetian context.

Figure 3: Demographics of Tourists in Venice and the Lagoon Islands



(Bettiol & Marini, 2022)

Dataset and Methodological Frameworks

As already mentioned, the aim of this study is to investigate the websites of local institutions and tour operators that particularly address their promotional message to children and their families. More specifically, it examines the discursive strategies used to promote traditional food culture in Venice and the Lagoon Islands to young Italian and international visitors. By focusing on the transmission of culinary traditions, the research explores how such communication can help preserve a local culture currently endangered by depopulation and globalisation (Zanini, 2017).

The present study is one of the outcomes of the SPIN2023 Project funded by 'Ca' Foscari' University of Venice (see footnote 1). The project included the

compilation of the *ForCCE Corpus* (Corpus of Food-Related Communication for Children in English). The materials in this corpus were categorised into three main typologies:

Technical Products (cookbooks, recipes, and cookery manuals),

Commercial Products (advertisements in various formats, including social media, TV commercials, and leaflets), and

Institutional Products (websites by international organisations such as WHO, FAO, UNESCO, and UNICEF).

The common characteristic for the inclusion of materials in the corpus was that materials had to deal with child-oriented nutrition. The websites examined in this study were part of the **Commercial Products** category.

While the general project focuses on food communication for children, the present investigation specifically examines child-oriented promotion of Venice. Consequently, the websites analysed were selected from those in the FoRRCE Corpus that present the tourist offer for Venice and the Lagoon Islands in both English and Italian. The websites are *Kids in Venice*, *Venezia Unica*, *Venice Kids Tours*, *Vivo Venetia*, *Veneto for Kids* and *ViaggiaPiccoli*. In particular, they were selected from those websites that specifically target children, families travelling with children, or containing sections that were explicitly meant for these categories of visitors. All pages were selected between 2023 and 2025 (following the duration of the project), but they were last accessed in January 2026, i.e., when data were collected for the present research.

The websites are run by local institutions, individual tour operators, or local tour guides who introduce the territory to prospective visitors by first describing its characteristics and then presenting typical aspects of its history, architecture, and local culture.

One of these websites, *VeneziaUnica* is the official tourist website run by the City of Venice Tourist and Travel Information Center. It is a portal from where tourist can book tickets for the local transport services, museum, and other attractions, but it also disseminates information on the city's attractions, services and traditions (Cesiri & Coccetta, 2017).

Four websites (i.e., *Kids in Venice*, *Venezia Unica*, *Venice Kids Tours*, *Vivo Venetia*) present a version in Italian and a version in English that can be selected by choosing the preferred language from the website's homepage.

The only exceptions are *ViaggiaPiccoli* and *Veneto For Kids*; both are available only in Italian, even though the latter has an English title.

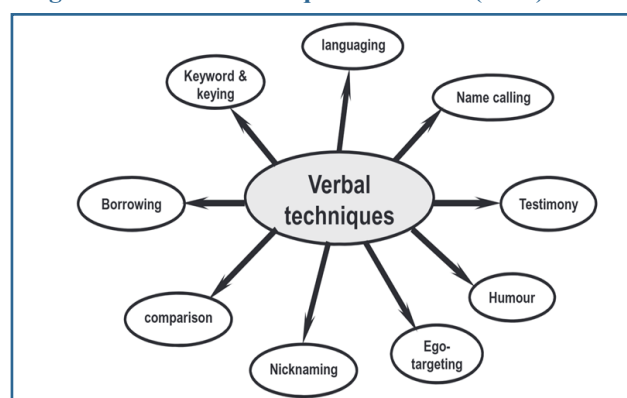
The websites were browsed manually to identify any reference to the food-related aspects or traditions of Venice and the Lagoon Islands. A comparison of the English and Italian versions suggests that they are not always direct translations of one another. Even if one was translated from the other, the significant differences in style and content indicate that both versions might

have been re-edited after translation. Determining which language served as the source or target text proved difficult, as some websites automatically displayed in either Italian or English. For this reason, the versions in the two languages were considered as parallel, independent texts, not as translations, which would also have entailed a different analytical and methodological approach to the analysis of the texts themselves.

A qualitative Discourse Analysis was thus conducted using the methods of Discourse Analysis as postulated by Gee (2011, 2017). Moreover, the analysis considered the verbal techniques in the language of tourism as theorised by Dann (1996). According to these two frameworks, and as applied in this study, Discourse Analysis is a theoretical-methodological framework that examines how language is used to construct meaning, to express identity, and to reflect social, political, and cultural factors (Gee, 2011, 2017). It analyses how language use is influenced by, and how it influences, the world around it. Through rigorous, pre-determined sets of criteria, Discourse Analysis systematically looks for patterns that might indicate the attitudes of those involved in a certain communicative event towards reality (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Tourism studies have often used Discourse Analysis to investigate patterns in tourism promotional discourse. In this regard, the first application is attributed to sociolinguist Dann (1996), who combined semiotic analysis of tourism promotional material and sociolinguistics. In his ground-breaking study, he identifies key recurrent patterns in tourism promotional discourse. The model is still used today to investigate tourism discourse, as is done in the

Figure 4: Verbal Techniques in Dann's (1996) Model



(Source: Chiwanga, 2014:163)

present investigation. Dann (1996) identifies several visual and verbal techniques that are systematically used to promote tourist destinations. The verbal techniques are effectively illustrated by Chiwanga (2014), as shown in Figure 4.

The verbal technique that is applied in this study to examine the materials from the six websites is 'linguaging'. Dann defines this as

the impressive use of foreign words, but also a manipulation of the vernacular, a special choice of vocabulary, and not just for its own sake.
(1996:184)

Cappelli further refines the definition by adding that linguaging is

the use of foreign words to provide local color or to flatter the pseudo-linguistic abilities of the reader (2013:353).

Several studies have investigated the productive use of linguaging in tourism promotional discourse (e.g., Jaworski *et al.*, 2003; Cappelli, 2013; Francesconi, 2014). Jaworski *et al.* (2003) have focused on the investigation of promotional tourism discourse in high-end travel media and television, examining linguaging as a styling technique for the destination. They have detected that linguaging functions as a form of linguistic fetishism in that the actual meaning of the foreign words is often irrelevant; instead, the presence of the language serves to style the destination as exotic, elite, or authentic. Moreover, their findings suggest that media often uses tokens, or fixed expressions (e.g., greetings or toasts) to create a '*façade*' of cultural engagement while maintaining a safe distance for the tourist.

Cappelli (2013), instead, has analysed linguaging in digital genres, more specifically expatriate and travel blogs. She has also expanded the definition of the technique to include 'language crossing' (p.358), a form of code-switching whereby bloggers move between English and the local language to establish a hybrid identity. She claims that linguaging in blogs is not just about seducing the reader (as in brochures) but about authentication. By using local terms for food, places, or customs without translation, the bloggers establish themselves as insiders or expert travellers rather than mere tourists (i.e., outsiders).

Similarly, Francesconi (2014) has examined brochures, guidebooks, and websites, but conducting a multimodal analysis on these materials. She argues that linguaging cannot be analysed in isolation. It works through semiotic cohesion, i.e., the interaction between text, typography, and imagery. A foreign word functions as a visual ornament that triggers the tourist gaze. She reinforces the interpretation that linguaging serves the traveller's ego by making them feel like an experienced expert (similarly to the definition given by Cappelli, 2013) capable of decoding cultural nuances, even if they only understand a handful of local words.

Previous Research on Promoting Venice Through Linguaging

Previous research, of which this study can be considered a follow-up, is presented in Cesiri (2017, 2019). These studies have conducted a comparative analysis of the communicative strategies in English and in Italian through which the city of Venice and the Veneto region are promoted. In these contributions, linguaging is defined as the use of a local language or dialect term alongside its English translation or paraphrase.

Cesiri (2017) – building on Dann's (1996) first definition – defines linguaging as a verbal technique used in tourism promotion to bridge cultural gaps by introducing local terms. When managed effectively, it can reduce the cultural distance between visitors and locals, enhancing the appeal of a destination. In its qualitative analysis of English-language websites promoting Venice, the study found that the authors of the websites frequently use Venetian dialect terms, but these translations or explanations often fail to convey the deep cultural connotations of the terms. This creates a cultural gap where tourists miss the chance to truly connect with the local culture because the promotion implies a high level of background knowledge they may not possess.

While Cesiri (2019) identified that local institutions such as official websites of the Veneto provinces select symbolic markers, i.e., stereotypical representations of a territory, to create an iconic image for tourists. Linguaging is one of the key verbal techniques used to reinforce these markers and influence tourists' expectations before their visit. However, institutional

websites often employ languaging in a way that presupposes a high level of presumed knowledge on the part of the tourist. When dialect or local terms are used without sufficient translation or cultural mediation, it can broaden the distance between the local culture and the visitor, thus preventing tourists from establishing a meaningful connection with the destination's authentic culture. In this regard, the study found that languaging sometimes acts as a compensatory strategy when verbal and visual markers do not align.

These studies clearly illustrate that languaging helps to construct a specific 'linguascape', i.e. a linguistic landscape, in which the visible use of language shapes a destination's identity and affects the tourist experience (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). This is especially relevant in the construction of the tourist experience concerning the promotion of the food-related aspects of a destination, since they involve the cultural traditions of the place. This kind of promotion transforms local products into cultural artifacts that the tourist can literally and figuratively consume both prior to the visit and once at the destination. By using the local Italian or dialect term, the text creates an aura of authenticity. As Cesiri (2017, 2019) has already noted, these terms function as symbolic markers that signal to the tourist they are experiencing the real spirit of the place, satisfying the ego-target of the traveller who wishes to be seen as a sophisticated connoisseur rather than a mass tourist (Cappelli, 2013; Francesconi, 2014).

In this context, the linguascape is transformed into a foodscape, in which the gastronomic traditions of the destination are used to map linguistic flavours onto the physical and cultural consumption of food. This process elevates gastronomy from mere food consumption to a semiotic experience where the tourist consumes the destination's identity (Park & Widyanta, 2022).

Literature Review - Child-oriented and Family Tourism Communication

While Discourse Analysis studies on child-oriented and family tourism communication are not available at the moment of writing, research surrounding family tourism communication has evolved from a critique of traditional sociological frameworks towards more nuanced

understandings of the psychological and developmental impacts of travel on children. For instance, Obrador (2012) has argued for a re-socialisation of tourism theory. By focusing on mass tourism in Menorca, highlighting the importance of thick sociality and the domestic performances of family life that are often overlooked in favour of more exoticised travel narratives. On the other hand, Schänzel & Yeoman (2014) have utilised cognitive mapping to predict the future of the sector, identifying a shift toward more complex, multi-generational travel patterns and fluid social networks that transcend the traditional nuclear family model. As the market became more specialised, Germann Molz (2016) has explored the rise of family voluntourism, noting that while these trips are framed through a discourse of global transformation, they often serve primarily as tools for the internal moral development and bonding of the traveling family unit itself.

In more recent years, research has shifted toward empirical analyses of children as active agents and the resulting internal family dynamics. Wu *et al.* (2019) have used photo-elicitation to capture the direct voices of Chinese children, revealing that their memorable experiences are rooted in togetherness, physical play, and nature. This focus on the child's perspective is complemented by Akkan & Bozyiğit (2020) who have conducted a content analysis of child-friendly hotels to show how the industry has responded to the child's influence on household purchasing decisions by prioritising entertainment and specialised food services. Further exploring the pressure on modern parenting, Fu *et al.* (2024) have identified specific strategies used by parents to resolve 'parenting-leisure conflicts', categorising them based on their ability to balance personal relaxation with the demands of childcare.

In terms of both the psychological antecedents of travel and the professional management of these experiences, Wang *et al.* (2026) have investigated the role of self-differentiation in adolescents, demonstrating that a child's psychological development and the quality of their relationship with their parents are critical drivers of family travel motivation. Finally, Fehrest *et al.* (2025) have highlighted the persistent power imbalances within the industry. By examining the perspectives of tour managers in Iran, they advocate for a move toward

Table 1: Results from *VeneziaUnica*

English	Italian
Some restaurants are child-friendly, with special menus and spaces designed to accommodate families	<i>Alcuni ristoranti sono a misura di bambino, con menu ad hoc e spazi pensati per accogliere famiglie *</i>
* Lit. 'Some restaurants are child-tailored with ad-hoc menus and spaces thought to welcome families'	

the co-creation of itineraries, arguing that involving children in the planning process is essential for the future sustainability and appeal of child-focused tourism.

However, these studies mainly focus on understanding socio-psychological and developmental impacts of travel on children and their families. A distinct gap in the state-of-the-art can be identified in terms of studies that examine child-oriented and family tourism communication using Discourse Analysis based theoretical-methodological frameworks. By applying such a perspective, this paper directly addresses this significant absence in the current literature.

Findings

The present Section contains the comparative analysis of the web pages in which instances of languaging were found. Since the section displays data in English and in Italian, or the translation in English of data in Italian, these will be reported in the form of tables. The tables display the content from the English versions of the websites in the 'English' columns, while the 'Italian' columns contain the corresponding Italian text. To ensure that the original meaning is accessible, a literal English translation of the Italian text is provided in either the table notes or a dedicated column. Findings in Italian will not be highlighted differently than the text in English, to reflect the use of italics and bold type of the source texts to which they refer. In fact, in all the texts contained in the tables, emphases are reported as used in the corresponding original website.

The website *Venezia dei Bambini / Kids in Venice* made no reference to the food traditions of Venice or the Lagoon Islands in either its English or Italian versions. Conversely, *VeneziaUnica* included only a single relevant sentence, which is presented in Table 1 for both language versions.

The text in Table 1 shows no instances of languaging, but it indicates in very general terms that some restaurants welcome children with 'child-friendly spaces' and dedicated menus. No other information is given, nor are links to specific restaurants provided to illustrate what the sentence means. The meaning of the information is therefore unclear, as it is uncertain which specific age group of children (infants, toddlers, older children) are targeted and what kinds of children's food might be found. The sentence contains an instance of presupposition, which – in Discourse Analysis – usually means an implicit assumption about the world or a background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse (Gee, 2011). In this case, however, the text ignores whether prospective tourists already possess the knowledge necessary to understand what remains implicit, either because they are not familiar with Italian food for children or because they are Italian but not familiar with dining facilities in Venice. Therefore, the message is opaque and fails to transmit the intended message of reassuring families traveling with children that they will find child-friendly options once at the destination.

Table 2 contains the only instance of food-related information found on the website *Venice Kids Tours*. In this case, some instances of languaging can be seen in the section entitled 'Food Tips'.

The two cases of languaging are 'gelato' (ice-cream) and 'gianduiotto'. Pizza cannot be considered a case of languaging since it is a now well-attested Italian borrowing in many languages of the world. The first case, instead, clearly differentiates *gelato* from ice cream. The Oxford English Dictionary (reference source for British English) and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (for American English) produced interesting results: no entry of the word is present in the former, while the latter contains the definition 'a soft rich ice cream containing little or no air' for *gelato*, while 'ice cream' is defined

Table 2. Results from *Venice Kids Tours*

English	Italian
Taste Venice: Food Tips There are so many places to eat excellent Venetian food that we can't list them all! Here's some tasty tips: just our favourite places... If you want a superb gelato (ice-cream), try the famous 'gianduiotto' at <i>Nico</i> or a cone at <i>SuSo</i> or at <i>Alaska</i>. A delicious pizza? We like it at <i>Rosso Pomodoro</i> and at <i>Al Profeta</i>. Wonderful pastry shops for the sweet tooths: <i>Rosa Salva</i>, <i>Al Ponte delle paste</i>, <i>Tonolo</i>. As for the typical local dishes, the list of restaurants would be too long!?! We give you just a few recommendations: Bars (<i>bacari</i>) to try the typical Venetian <i>cichéti</i> in the Rialto area: <i>All'Arco</i>, <i>Ae Do spade</i>. Local restaurants to have a more relaxing meal: <i>Osteria Antico Calice</i>, <i>Trattoria alla Madonna</i>.	Gustatevi Venezia: Consigli Per Mangiare Alcuni consigli gustosi, senza aver certo la pretesa di fornire una lista esaustiva! Questi sono alcuni dei nostri posti preferiti, ma ce ne sono molti altri di altrettanto validi... Voglia di un gelato spaziale?! L'inimitabile gianduiotto da <i>Nico</i> o un super cono da <i>SuSo</i> o da <i>Alaska</i>. Una buona pizza? A noi piace per esempio quella di <i>Rosso Pomodoro</i> e quella di <i>Al Profeta</i>. Per una dolce pausa o un'ottima colazione: <i>Pasticceria Rosa Salva</i>, <i>Al Ponte delle paste</i>, da <i>Tonolo</i>. Per gustare la cucina tipica veneziana ci sarebbe una lista infinita!! Vi diamo solo un paio di suggerimenti, non ce ne vogliano gli altri... Per provare i mitici <i>cichéti</i> a Rialto: <i>All'Arco</i>, <i>Do spade</i>. Per una pausa più lunga comodamente seduti: <i>Osteria Antico Calice</i>, <i>Trattoria alla Madonna</i>.*
* Lit. 'TASTE VENICE: TIPS TO EAT. Some tasty tips, without pretending to give you a complete list! These are some of our favourite places, but there are many others that are equally worth a visit... Fancy an out-of-this-world gelato?! Nico's unique gianduiotto or a SuSo's or an Alaska's super cone. A delicious pizza? For example, we like the one they make at Rosso Pomodoro or at Al Profeta. For a sweet break or an excellent breakfast: Pasticceria Rosa Salva, Al Ponte delle paste, at Tonolo. To taste the typical Venetian cuisine the list is endless!! We just give you a couple of suggestions, the others won't hate us... To try the legendary <i>cichéti</i> at Rialto: All'Arco, Do spade. For a longer break comfortably seated: Osteria Antico Calice, Trattoria alla Madonna.'	

as 'a sweet flavoured frozen food containing cream or butterfat and usually eggs'. Thus, there is an attested diatopic (i.e., US-based) differentiation between ice cream and *gelato*, which the author of the text in Table 2 might have wanted to clarify. However, the fact that the text did not provide any other detail concerning the differences in terms of the two products, makes the expression confusing: by adding ice cream in brackets after *gelato* might lead readers to misinterpret the two specialties as the same thing, while several sources report the two products as different preparations.²

Similarly, *gianduiotto* is indicated in quotation marks and refers to a hazelnut-flavoured *gelato* (*gianduja*) served in glasses with whipped cream. It is a typical preparation served only by one café in Venice (<https://www.gelaterianico.com/>) and is a ritual of the first days of Spring by Venetians who take their on-the-go *gianduiotto* and then go for a walk on the *Zattere*, one of

the most famous and scenic promenades in Venice. This is a long, paved waterfront walkway (a *fondamenta*) located on the southern edge of the Dorsoduro district, stretching for about 1.7 km (1 mile) along the Giudecca Canal. However, all this information is missing from the website, which fails to inform tourists – both in English and in Italian – of the characteristics of the dish, especially considering that children might want to taste this *gelato*-based preparation. Moreover, by just providing its name with no further description, the risk of misinterpretation and confusion is higher, by English and Italian tourists alike since they risk of confusing it with the hazelnut-based chocolate bearing the same name (*gianduiotto*) but typical of the north-western Italian region of Piedmont.

Another case of languaging, *cichéti*, is also used in both versions. They are indicated as generally 'typical Venetian' food in the English version and as 'mitici' (legendary) in Italian. In this case, communication again fails to transmit the cultural value of this local food. Venetian *cicheti* (or *cicchetti*) are commonly (mis)

² See, e.g., Venchi Confectioner's Website (<https://eu.venchi.com/blog/italian-gelato-vs-icecream>) or *Food & Wine*'s specialised magazine (<https://www.foodandwine.com/gelato-vs-ice-cream-8609179>).

Table 3: Results from *Vivo Venetia*

English	Italian
Child-friendly Cafes and Bars There are various places that are safe for children—either because they are far from the water or because they have indoor gardens or courtyards. Here, parents can enjoy their coffee, aperitif, or lunch while children can have fun safely. The following list is just a short overview of these kind of places: Al Tappo <i>bacaro</i> with indoor courtyard in the Jewish Ghetto – Cannaregio Birreria Pizzeria La Corte in campo San Polo – San Polo Caffè Illy, with outdoor tables in the Royal Gardens – San Marco Alla Serra dei Giardini, bar, flower shop, and educational space for schools, with a large garden – Castello Combo, bar inside the cloisters of the former Oratory of the Crociferi, in Campo dei Gesuiti – Cannaregio	Bar e Caffè a Misura Di Bambino Diversi locali sono decisamente ambienti sicuri per i più piccoli, perché distanti dall’acqua, o con giardini o corti interne, dove i genitori possono consumare con tranquillità un caffè, un aperitivo o un pranzo mentre i bambini si divertono. Il breve elenco che segue è una rapida selezione di alcuni di questi posti: Al Tappo tipico bacaro, con corte interna, nei pressi del Ghetto – Cannaregio Birreria Pizzeria La Corte in campo San Polo – San Polo Caffè Illy, con tavolini all’interno dei Giardini Reali – San Marco Alla Serra dei Giardini, bar, fioreria e spazio educativo per scuole con giardino – Castello Combo, bar all’interno del chiostro dell’ex oratorio dei Crociferi, Campo dei Gesuiti – Cannaregio. *
* Lit. ‘Child-tailored Bars and Cafes. Several places are definitely safe places for the little ones because they are far from the water, or with inside gardens and courtyards where parents can enjoy in peace their coffee, aperitif or their lunch while children enjoy themselves. The following short list is a quick selection of some of these places: Al Tappo traditional bacaro, with inside courtyard, close to the Ghetto – Cannaregio. Birreria Pizzeria La Corte in San Polo little square – San Polo. Caffè Illy, with small tables inside the Giardini Reali – San Marco. Alla Serra dei Giardini, bar, flower shop and didactic space for schools with garden – Castello. Combo, bar inside the cloister of the former oratory of the Crucifers, Campo dei Gesuiti – Cannaregio.	

translated as ‘Venetian tapas’, which does not convey the socialising ritual behind their consumption (see Cesiri, 2017) or the characteristics of their preparation. However, in this particular case, the text in Italian does not specify the difference between the Venetian word and the homonymous word in standard Italian, which refers to alcoholic ‘shots’. Here, again, we notice the presence of a high degree of presupposition (Gee, 2011) by the author of the text in the assumed knowledge possessed by prospective Italian visitors. In addition, these kinds of preparations, and the environment / social situation in which consumption should happen, are not suitable for children. So, the suggestion included in a text aimed at families with children further contrasts with the communicative purpose of the passage.

Table 3 shows the only reference to food and drinks in Venice to be found on the website *Vivo Venetia*. While there is no reference to typical food or drinks, what is interesting to notice the table is that the web page indicates the typical *bacari* (local forms of rustic taverns, more similar to a pub than to a restaurant / inn) as family- / child-friendly environments. In fact, these places are known for being

small, typical Venetian taverns or bars where people stand while eating, chat, and toast with a glass of wine or Spritz alongside delicious cicchetti (Venetian tapas)³.

Therefore, it is quite peculiar to find them suggested as places where a family can bring children – even young children – for a lunch break after a long day spent visiting the island, as already noticed for the passage in Table 2. Moreover, the only reason why the specific place is suggested as ‘child-friendly’ is because it is positioned far from the canals, so children are safe not because they might taste Venice’s local cuisine in a child-friendly environment but because they will not fall into the water.

The same kind of information is provided both in English and in Italian, and in both cases the text fails to inform the public of the characteristics of a *bacaro*, which might not be a familiar facility to either domestic or foreign tourists. Language is again associated with a high level of presupposition, making the text opaque in English as well as in Italian.

3 [https://www.russopalacehotel.com/en/news-en/bacaro-meaning-and-tradition-in-venice/#:~:text=Bacari%20are%20small%2C%20typical%20Venetian,alongside%20delicious%20cicchetti%20\(Venetian%20tapas\)](https://www.russopalacehotel.com/en/news-en/bacaro-meaning-and-tradition-in-venice/#:~:text=Bacari%20are%20small%2C%20typical%20Venetian,alongside%20delicious%20cicchetti%20(Venetian%20tapas)). Last visited 28 January 2026.

Table 4: Results from *Veneto for Kids*

Italian	English Translation by Author
<i>Dove mangiare? Dove andare in bagno? Con un po' di organizzazione si può gestire la giornata tranquillamente. All'arrivo in stazione dei treni abbiamo fatto ricognizione in bagno (a pagamento 1 euro) e mangiato al sacco. Lo stesso abbiamo fatto durante la nostra visita a Palazzo Ducale (bagno e merenda sempre al sacco). Abbiamo comunque visto lungo i percorsi che conducono a Piazza San Marco tante panetterie, pizze al metro e piccoli bar dove si può acquistare cibo senza spendere una fortuna. Sappiate però che si tratta di locali molto piccoli, che difficilmente offrono posto a sedere e che a Venezia vige il divieto di 'fare pic-nic' per strada.</i>	Where to eat? Where to go to the bathroom? With a little organization, you can easily manage your day. Upon arrival at the train station, we checked out the toilet (1 euro fee) and ate our packed lunch . We did the same during our visit to the Doge's Palace (toilet and packed lunch). However, along the routes leading to St. Mark's Square, we saw many bakeries, pizza by the meter, and small cafés where you can buy food without spending a fortune. Keep in mind, though, that these are very small places, which rarely offer seating, and that Venice has a ban on 'picnicking' on the streets.

The website *Veneto for Kids* dedicates several pages to Venice and the Lagoon Islands. The page dedicated to the Lagoon Islands does not provide any information on their food-related aspects, while the only information is contained in the text in Table 4, which refers to Venice.

The page provides information only in Italian, thus it targets only domestic tourists. The text does not employ the technique of languaging, but we notice some general reference to 'bakeries, pizza by the meter, and small cafés': all cheap options that might not provide real examples (or limited ones) of local food-related traditions. What is also unusual is the indication that these places do not offer the possibility to eat on the spot, while – it is specified – the city prohibits picnicks. The paragraph, therefore, does not present the experience of eating in Venice as a 'family- / child-unfriendly' experience. This description of Venice and its islands may discourage families with children who require a seated lunch after a long city tour. Such a portrayal overlooks the existence of family-friendly facilities, which are indicated (even though only through hints) by *VeneziaUnica* (see Table 1).

Finally, *ViaggiaPiccoli* is a website only in Italian, especially dedicated to suggestions and advice to families traveling with children. It is not exclusively focused on Venice since it contains pages on destinations all over Italy, but it presents a specific section on Venice and the Lagoon Islands. The text in Table 5 is taken from a page dedicated to a visit to Murano, Burano and Torcello.

The only reference to food-related information found on the page is contained in the section describing a visit to the island of Burano. This is perhaps the text that seems to be more specifically dedicated to children of those found on the websites under analysis. Even though the actual cookies are described with scanty details, they are described in sufficient detail concerning the characteristic shape that might help to identify them in local bakeries. However, the information is tailored to meet parents' interests, as testified by reference to the nutritious properties of the cookies ('*fatti con impasto nutriente*' / 'made with a very nutritious dough'), and to the replication of the recipe at home, while children might be more interesting in their taste and the fact that they come in different versions (e.g., with chocolate chips or raisins). However, the omission that they are typically dipped in liquor is purposely omitted because

Table 5: Results from *ViaggiaPiccoli*

Italian	English Translation by Author
<i>Per proporre ai bambini una pausa merenda golosa e tipica fermatevi in una delle pasticcerie dell'isola per assaggiare i tipici biscotti a forma di ciambella o di 'esse'. Questi biscotti sono conosciuti con diversi nomi (bussolà, bussolai, buranei, esse di Burano), ma il nome più diffuso è buranelli. Sono biscotti fatti con un impasto molto nutriente. Se volete provare a farli trovate una delle ricette qui.</i>	To suggest kids a delicious and traditional break, stop at one of the island's pastry shops to taste the typical doughnut-shaped or 'S'-shaped cookies. These cookies are known by various names (bussolà, bussolai, buranei, esse di Burano), but the most common name is buranelli. They are cookies made with very nutritious dough. If you want to try making them, you can find one of the recipes here.

the text is aimed at families with children. The use of the local name and its variants – either in dialect or in Italian form – helps the author of the text to complete the description of the cookies and make them recognisable by the prospective tourists, while constructing a local identity for the cookies themselves that effectively serves the specific purpose of languaging in tourism discourse.

Discussion

Previous research on languaging in websites promoting the city of Venice's food-related traditions (Cesiri, 2017) has found that they are not entirely successful in conveying the deep cultural context to tourists, noticing for instance an evident loss of cultural connotations to name local food. This is testified by the approximation of *cicchetti* – appetisers of various kinds but protagonists of a socialising ritual – which are generally translated as 'tapas' with no mention of the context in which they are consumed. The previous study also found that texts randomly alternated terms, sometimes in Italian, sometimes in English, as was the case of *gelato* and ice cream, used interchangeable, while also in this study it was ascertained that they refer to different preparation and bear different culture-related, diatopic connotations.

The results shown in this study, moreover, have revealed that even less culture-related information is transmitted to children and to their parents. In the pages in English, parents are not informed or parents are even discouraged to bring their own food, as was the case of the website in Italian. This implies an even more significant loss of information to families and children than to tourists of other age groups in general. It also implies a loss in the preservation and transmission of local culture to prospective tourists and young generations of tourists. Indeed, the findings reveal that the transmission of culture-related information is even more limited for children and their parents than for general tourists, often resulting in a significant loss of local cultural preservation.

This may occur because tourism discourse frequently employs languaging as a way to authenticate the travel experience and flatter the reader's perceived expertise. However, as noted by Cesiri (2017), when local terms are used without adequate cultural mediation, they

fail to convey deep cultural connotations, such as the social rituals and seasonal traditions associated with them. This creates a cultural gap because the promotion presupposes a high level of background knowledge that families likely do not possess. This was frequently the case of the websites analysed in this study with the only exception being *ViaggiaPiccoli*, possibly because it is a website by non-local tour operators; they describe local tradition with the perspective of the 'outsider', trying to explain as much as possible to other future visitors regarding what they will find at the destination.

In this regard, Cappelli (2013) highlights that languaging is often used for authentication, helping travellers feel like insiders. This failure to provide cultural mediation reflects a broader gap in family tourism discourse; as already highlighted by Wu *et al.* (2019) and Akkan & Bozyiğit (2020) – while the industry increasingly acknowledges the child's influence, the communicative strategies often remain adult-centric, neglecting the specific developmental and social needs of the child as an active agent. By failing to adapt these linguistic markers for a younger audience, the discourse misses the opportunity to foster the complex sociality and domestic bonding identified by Obrador (2012) as central to the family travel experience. In fact, in the websites for families, this potential for connection is lost; for example, two websites – run by local tour guides – tend to discourage local culinary exploration by suggesting packed lunches or by reducing food to mere physical safety – such as *bacari* that are not child-friendly places but are suggested only because they are far from the water – rather than explaining the cultural significance of the venue.

Crucially, the analysed websites fail to provide any specific pedagogical aspects or incentives that would link the visit of Venice and its unique gastronomy to a rewarding experience for children. Furthermore, it must be underlined that most young visitors are effectively excluded from directly engaging with the digital contents due to a significant language barrier, as the platforms lack child-friendly linguistic adaptations. As Francesconi (2014) argues, languaging should work through semiotic cohesion where text and imagery are created by means of verbal descriptions, which interact to trigger the tourist gaze. When this fails, food-related traditions are

not successfully transformed into cultural artefacts that can be meaningfully consumed, leading to a failure in passing local identity to the next generation of tourists, further confirmed by the two websites (*VeneziaUnica* and *Venezia dei Bambini / Kids in Venice*), which contain very limited or no reference at all to the food-related local traditions, thus almost cancelling these cultural aspects from the tourist experience of young visitors.

Conclusions

To conclude, the Discourse Analysis undertaken on the use of the verbal technique of languaging, conducted on six websites targeting children and their families in English and in Italian to promote the food-related aspects of Venice and the Lagoon Island, has revealed that access to this information is often limited by a high level of presupposition, leaving cultural meanings opaque for both domestic and international visitors.

However, this study presents several limitations which lie in the current availability of material and the quality of information provided by institutional and private

websites. The research has also focused only on food-related aspects as available on the websites, while tour material cannot be accessed. The study has also focused only on the verbal component of the website, disregarding the visual component of the web pages.

Future research should therefore expand the scope of the present research to include the visual component of the same material through a multimodal analysis, to determine how imagery supports or contradicts verbal claims. Furthermore, subsequent studies could investigate the tour material (if accessible), or other media, such as social media platforms, and other genres including printed or digital guidebooks and audioguides specifically designed for younger audiences. Finally, while this study centres on food, there is a clear need to examine other aspects of cultural tourism promotion – including history, art, and landmarks – to ensure a more comprehensive transmission of the cultural heritage of Venice and the Lagoon Island to present and future generations or visitors.

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