Walloon commodification in tourism: pride or profit?

Understanding the locals' perspective in the Belgian Ardennes



MA Thesis
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MA track: Online Culture
Major (in Online Culture): Global Communication
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June 2020
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Abstract

Due to their uniqueness, and their bond to specific places and communities, minority languages are increasingly perceived as valuable resources for tourism. Doing so is not only perceived as capable to create profit, but it is also perceived as creating renewed interest in such languages. It is with this renewed interest in mind that the project '*My municipality says 'Yes' to minority languages*' was developed for the Walloon language and tourism was one of the areas through which the language would be reintegrated. For such a project to be successful, research shows that it requires the support of the local community. Yet, no research was done to understand what the attitudes of the local community were regarding such a project. This seems to be a recurring trend in the field of tourism. Therefore, this study aims at understanding the attitude of the local community regarding the commodification of a regional language for tourism. To do so, the case of the Walloon language in the Belgian Ardennes was chosen and thirteen in-depth interviews were done with locals living in the region. Results show that locals find it an interesting idea but they remain sceptical about the relevance and the benefits of such a project. Yet, it is also interesting to understand what influences their ideas and perspectives, as well as what they perceive to be a meaningful use of Walloon in tourism. The findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of all these aspects and further contributes to the fields of tourism and sociolinguistics by focussing on the local community's perspective when it comes to language commodification.

Keywords: cultural tourism, regional languages, commodification, locals.

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Acknowledgements

When I started this master's program, I knew from the beginning what topic I wanted for my thesis. I wanted to talk about the Ardennes, its people and their language. I am not sure why I wanted to talk about the Walloon language, but tourism and the Ardennes have been my go-to topics for papers and theses since I started university. Yet, I would never have imagined how important this thesis would become over the months. Even while finishing this thesis, I have even more questions than when I started. I am still learning a whole lot about my region, its culture and the dying language my grandparents used to speak. Yet, I have never felt as close to being Ardennese as I did during this thesis. This has been made possible by a few people I would very much like to thank.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Ad Backus for his availability, patience, kindness and guidance during the writing of this thesis. I always enjoyed our meetings and his expertise, but most of all, his encouragement when I wouldn't see where this entire process was leading to. I would also like to thank all the interviewees who participated in this research. Their availability and enthusiasm in this topic made the transcribing of the interviews and the writing of the report an invigorating process. I enjoyed all of our conversations.

I would also like to thank my parents for always encouraging me to do what I wanted to do and be supportive no matter what. I would especially like to thank my mom, Wendy, for reading my thesis over and over again. She is probably as knowledgeable on this topic by now as I am. I would also like to thank my father, Remi, for transmitting his passion for our region and its culture to me. I would also like to thank my sister Lisa and Maks for always encouraging me.

Thank you all, without your help and support, this thesis would not have been the same.

Sarah-Maria Geradin

Introduction

Regional languages are increasingly being acknowledged as an economic resource and this is reflected in the growing amount of tourism and sociolinguistics literature on the subject. In the past decades, the value of languages in tourism has been more and more recognized by scholars and the tourism industry, especially in the context of cultural tourism (Sproull, 1996; Carden, 2012). Cultural tourism is a form of tourism in which tourists experience a culture through the consumption of resources such as art, heritage, folklore, etc. (Richards, 2007). Due to the remarkable expansion of the tourism industry, as well as the diversification and fragmentation of the cultural products, destinations need to differentiate themselves from others and this can be achieved through the use of local resources. By doing so, a destination can position itself as unique and authentic, which is important to cater to the tourist demand and provide them with a meaningful experience (Richards, 2007).

By being conceptualized as cultural resources, regional languages can be used in the tourism setting. As regional languages can be characterized through their bond to localities, communities and their uniqueness, their use in tourism can make the tourism experience more authentic which is highly valued in the experience economy (Duchêne & Heller, 2012). Additionally, these languages become commodities by being used as tourism resource which can contribute economically to a destination (Hall-Lew & Lew, 2014; Sproull, 1996). By becoming commodities, certain scholars argue that a renewed interest in these languages develops. When done successfully, this can even lead to the revalorization of a regional language, possibly contributing to its maintenance (Greathouse-Amador, 2005; Whitney-Squire & al., 2018). On the other hand, some scholars argue that linguistic commodification for profit can make these regional languages less authentic, too superficial or merely a form of folklorization (Barrera, 1998; Duchêne & Heller, 2012).

Therefore, studies from different fields have already focussed on this issue to better understand the commodification process of languages. Studies that focus on the use of minority or regional languages in the tourism setting have already focussed on countries such as Ireland (Carden, 2012), Canada (Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne, 2014; Whitney-Squire & al., 2018), Norway (Pietikainen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011), Mexico (Greathouse-Amador, 2005), etc. These studies are often qualitative and aim at better understanding the context and conditions of minority or regional language use in the tourism setting with a focus on visibility and salience. In the case of tourism research, studies combining languages and tourism continue to focus on understanding the role of language as a commodity, the effect of tourism on language and the effect of language on the tourist experience. An aspect that has received considerably less attention in this field is the relationship between language use in tourism and the local community (Whitney-Squire, 2016). Studies often either look at the way locals perceive and relate to regional or minority languages, how they perceive and relate to tourism or what the impacts of cultural commodification on the community are (Whitney-Squire, 2016). Yet, no study has looked in-depth at the way locals perceive the commodification of

their regional or minority languages for tourism purposes. Therefore, this will be the aim of this study.

To do so, this research focuses on Walloon, a regional language spoken in Wallonia in the south of Belgium. It is an endangered language that is on the verge of disappearing and to prevent this linguistic, cultural and heritage loss, projects are being put in place to prevent this to happen. Tourism is one of the areas through which the "*My municipality says 'Yes' to regional languages*" project attempts to maintain and boost the use of the Walloon language by commodifying the language for the tourism setting (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, n.d.). Yet, no study has looked at the attitude of locals towards this project. Therefore, the Walloon language is a relevant case that can help achieve the aim of this study. More precisely, the thirteen in-depth interviews were held in the Belgian Ardennes. Not only does this region aim at applying the Walloon language in the tourism setting, but it is also the region of Wallonia that attracts the highest numbers of tourists every year (CGT & OwT, 2019) and the region in which the language is expected to be best maintained (Francard, 2013). Finally, as little is still known about the perspective of locals regarding tourism in the Ardennes and about the use of the Walloon language in the tourism setting, this study will contribute to filling these knowledge gaps.

Literature Review

The following section is an overview of the area of study. It takes a closer look at what has already been said about the use of languages in tourism in different fields of study as well as what work about the commodification of languages in tourism has been done. The third section takes a closer look at research on the use of minority and regional languages in tourism and how locals relate to this. Finally, the last section explores what has not been addressed in these fields yet.

Language in tourism research

Various fields outside of linguistics have an interest in languages. This holds for the field of tourism studies which has given increasing attention to the role of language in tourism in the past two decades; and the field of sociolinguistics which aimed at understanding the influence of tourism on languages. Unfortunately, the body of work remains small and tends to be restricted to these two fields (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). Most work stems from the field of sociolinguistics which focusses mainly on the relationship between languages and identities in the tourism context (Sproull, 1996; Heller, 2003; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011, etc.). Work in the field of tourism is less developed and tends to present language merely as a functional tool (Carden, 2012; Whitney-Squire & al., 2018). Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) argue that the reason why little research has been done on language use in the field of tourism is because of the attributes that make up the tourist experience. It is assumed that when tourists do not understand a language, they will be disengaged, and thus, that language plays only a small role in the tourist experience. However, Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) claim that research proves the opposite: language is at the heart of tourism.

As most of the attention given to language in tourism is from a commodity perspective (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010), this is also reflected in research. An important body of literature has been written about the role of language as a communicative tool (Cronin, 2000; Cordeiro, 2011) and as a resource to be packaged and sold to tourists which contribute to tourism development (Heller, 2003). By commodifying a language, Cordeiro argues that it is "reduced into manageable pieces" (p. 386) and that helps to attract tourists, makes it identifiable to them, and contributes to making a tourist experience more cultural (Cordeiro, 2011; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). In such a situation, a language takes an economic value as it becomes part of the provision of products and services which is what tourism relies on (Leeman & Modan, 2010). Therefore, research first focussed on proving the importance of acquiring global languages such as English or Spanish for the tourism industry. Effective communication with tourists can reduce the linguistic and cultural distance between visitors and hosts, reduce cultural shock, and thus also reduce possible negative financial consequences (Cronin, 2000; Price, 2014).

Due to globalization and its impacts on society, increased awareness of the importance of local cultures and local resources developed (Hall, 1991; Duchene & Heller, 2012). Rather than leading to language genocide, globalization is perceived as leading towards a return to something more local where a new use for languages that are perceived as having no global or functional value can be created. It is thus becoming more evident that regional languages can also contribute economically to a destination, which explains the increasing support for these languages (Heller, 2003; Johnstone, 2016).

Language as a commodity

Hall-Lew and Lew (2014) explain that minority and regional languages can be used in the tourism setting by being conceptualized as heritage resources in marketing, placemaking and in the political economy of tourism of a destination. The authors developed a framework that permits to better understand the three different roles of language as a heritage resource. First, there is considering a language and its varieties in a specific place based on its historical value. The focus lays thus on understanding how a language has developed over time and the aim is to experience this in the tourism setting. When used this way, regional languages are associated with the authenticity and legitimacy of a place or a culture in a museumized form. The second role of language as heritage resource is how elements of the language as well as its varieties are being used in such ways that social goals are achieved. It focuses on the role of language in marketing and place consumption through the use of historical and actual components, but also on the way these can be used to maintain social affiliation and differentiation. It recognizes thus a link between language use and local identity and this link is exploited through the use of narratives which consequently creates a touristic sense of place. The third role is the way local actors use language resources as commodities to create meaningful experiences to be consumed by tourists. By combining the historical language context with the contemporary use of language, a space can be created where locals and tourists both use the regional language to achieve personal goals. Locals become language brokers and doing so gives them the advantage of seeming more authentic (Hall-Lew & Lew, 2014).

This chapter by Hall-Lew and Lew (2014) gives a detailed account of how languages and their varieties can be used for tourism purposes by both locals and tourists. It also looks at the way tourists can experience language use in tourism. When being used in the historical context (place names, museums, festivals, customs), tourists can experience it as historic, nostalgic, quaint or exotic, but also as authentic and legitimate due to the association of a language, or bits of it, to a place or a community. When being used in the contemporary context through marketing and place branding, it is especially the combination of traditional beliefs, social practices and history together with the physical setting (public display) that creates a narrative that can be sold to tourists. These narratives are then used to create a setting perceived by the tourist as more authentic and distant from their own culture which

creates a deeper experience than when language is used in postcards, souvenirs, informational booklets, etc. Finally, when language is being used by locals to sell to tourists who seek a more meaningful experience, it is often used as a package of different elements of a language adapted to the specific needs of tourists, and ultimately becomes the way identity is being performed to tourists. This way, locals can use their resources to differentiate themselves and economically benefit from this differentiation. This is especially appreciated by tourists who seek to experience authenticity. However, the extent to which the experience will be meaningful depends on the cultural and linguistic distance between the local and the tourist (Hall-Lew and Lew, 2014).

In this framework of Hall-Lew and Lew (2014), it seems that the language to be commodified is closely related to culture and identity. Hoare (2000) puts forward that there is often an association between a language and a cultural identity, but that it is not necessary to speak a language to associate with the cultural identity. There can thus be contradictions between the perceived role of a language in identification processes and the actual use of the language. The author further discusses the distinction between active and passive attitudes of a community regarding a language that refers to the association of positive attitudes to the language but not actively engaging with it, which affects all ways the language will be used (Hoare, 2000).

This process of using cultural resources as a product for tourism purposes has already received considerable attention in tourism research. More traditional studies argue that the consumption of culture results in rendering cultural practices inauthentic to tourists and meaningless to those who represent it. Furthermore, commodification results in the creation of a culture for tourism that is staged and thus, different from the actual culture (MacCannell, 1976; Greenwood, 1977). Johnstone (2012) argues that when cultures are not well protected from tourism, it can be threatened through the "erosion of language, customary practices, and cultural knowledge systems …" (Johnstone, 2012, p.3). Barrera (1998) adds that the impact of language use in tourism on tourists is minimal and the experience remains therefore superficial. This is because the interest of tourists in a host language is often motivated by the way it creates a cultural distance between tourists and hosts rather than conscious support for the language and language learning (Barrera, 1998). However, Cohen (1988) rejects this view and argues that culture is a lot more flexible and dynamic than suggested. He explains that the commodification of culture for tourism creates new values for cultural resources, permits the preservation of these resources, and with time, they become part of the local community making it perceived as authentic by tourists (Cohen 1988). Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne (2014) add that these are all aspects to take into consideration when commodify a language for tourism which results in asking many questions regarding legitimacy and authenticity. This can create struggles and tensions within a community (Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne, 2014).

Although the perspective of the local community is to some extent mentioned, it is not the focus of the previous literature. These scholars have looked at the way locals can use

language resources for their benefit, as well as how they can adapt to best provide a meaningful experience to tourists. It does however not look at the way locals experience language commodification. Omitting the opinion of the locals seems to be a recurrent issue in research that combines regional languages and tourism (Whitney-Squire, 2016).

Language commodification perceived by locals

Whitney-Squire (2016) discerned a lack of research done on language commodification and local communities in the fields of tourism and sociolinguistics. This is a more general trend in tourism studies identified by Cohen (1988) who explains that there is a bigger emphasis on understanding the tourist rather than the local perspective. This also explains why there are fewer definitions that explain what is referred to by 'local community'. Sherlock (2001) says that it relates to the notion of residency, belonging and commitment to a place or a community. Furthermore, the local community should not be approached as a homogenous stakeholder group as it consists of a conglomerate of stakeholders such as "*owners and the propertyless, the workers and the uninvolved residents, proprietors, entertainers, suppliers and possibly agriculturalists and anglers*" (Salazar & Graburn, 2014). These all have different stakes, interests and backgrounds which are relevant to take into consideration when doing research (Salazar & Graburn, 2014). This stakeholder group is important to take into consideration because as Muselaers (2017) explains, cultural commodification has important impacts on the local community. Therefore, to develop successful tourism projects, it is important to have its support. When a local community accepts and encourages a project in which cultural aspects are commodified, the project will tend to be more successful. To achieve this sustainability in cultural commodification projects, the benefits need to be in line with the needs of the local community which most often implies a balance between social and economic benefits (Muselaers, 2017). This has resulted in an increase of research done on the local community's perspective (Muselaers, 2017), but not enough regarding the use of regional languages in tourism.

As a reaction to this lack of focus on the local community, Phillips and Thomas (2001), Carden (2012) and Whitney-Squire (2016) put the local perspective at the centre of their study. Phillips and Thomas (2001) studied language shift and in-migration concerning tourism in Wales and found that those who were working in the tourism industry perceived the Welsh language as beneficial to develop tourism. Welsh-speakers also acknowledge tourism as an opportunity to encourage greater use of the language. However, locals were only a side note in this study and thus their attitudes were not further researched. Carden (2012) took the local community as a central focus for her study on the theming of spaces for tourists by using the Irish language. Her research shows that the theming of space by using the Irish language impacts the spatial and social situation of the Gaeltacht Quarter. Due to the abundance of Irish signs, locals were irritated as they perceived its use to be for profit rather than for pride. However, by developing spaces for tourists, space is also created for other groups to use

tourists to contest space and ideologies through language. This study shows that the way and the context in which specific minority languages are used is relevant for it to be supported by locals. In her study on community-based tourism in Haida, Canada, Whitney-Squire (2016) studied the role of language in the Haida tourism context to develop an appropriate way to use the language for tourism. The author suggests a cultural basis that permits to support language revitalization within community-based tourism. This is done because the author finds it important to understand the space in which locals and tourists interact in order to develop a successful language-related commodity that goes beyond economic benefits. Tourists and locals need to find a common base for shared and mutual understanding (Whitney-Squire & al., 2018). By looking at the way locals connect languages to places, these two studies touch upon the way locals perceive the use of languages for tourism purposes. However, as the way language commodification is perceived by locals is not the main focus of these studies, there is still detailed and in-depth knowledge missing regarding this issue. This is important as it appears that a better understanding of how locals perceive the commodification of cultural products would contribute to tourism planning (Muselaers, 2017).

The relationship between the local community, tourism and language use has been more developed in the fields of sociolinguistics and policy-making. Snow (2004) looks at the impacts of international tourism on the language choice of locals on the Island of Bastinmentos. Due to the interaction between different languages at the destination, language choice is becoming more and more needed during tourist-local encounters. As the use of Creole is encouraged through tourism and that English is the preferred lingua-franca contrary to Spanish, there are better chances for Creole to be maintained than Spanish. Greathouse-Amador (2005) studied the impacts of tourism on the local language in Cuetzalan, Mexico, focussing on language preservation and maintenance. As a result of language use in tourism, awareness of the endangerment of the language and the local culture rose. Consequently, the local community also became prouder. Locals were thus excited about sharing their local culture with tourists. However, the author also found that the impacts of language use on tourists remain superficial due to the limited contact they have with the language. The studies of Snow (2004) and Greathouse-Amador (2005) look at the effects and the advantages/disadvantages of using language in tourism but do not focus on understanding the attitudes of the local community regarding language commodification specifically.

Some studies briefly mention the way locals relate to the use of minority and regional languages in the tourism setting. However, these do not further explore this issue. Yet, as Muselaers (2017) and Whitney-Squire & al., (2018) stress, for a language to be a successful commodity in tourism, it is important to understand the perspective of the local community and see whether they support its commodification. Furthermore, only a few studies touching upon this matter have used research methods that permit getting a deeper understanding of such personal and subjective information. It is thus relevant to have a deeper understanding

of how locals perceive the commodification of regional languages for tourism. To do so, the case of the Walloon language will be used to fill this knowledge gap and the data will be collected through in-depth interviews.

Walloon in the tourism setting

Walloon language

Walloon is one of the regional languages spoken in the French-speaking region of Belgium called Wallonia. It is spoken in the central and eastern parts of the region and has four variations (image 1). Other regional languages are Picard, Gaumais and Champenois and these languages are spoken in the southern and western parts of Wallonia (image 1). Walloon originates from Latin but differs from French due to influences from Gallic and Germanic languages. Used as a language for communication until the beginning of the 20th century, French started to replace all regional languages spoken in Wallonia. Today, Walloon and other regional languages are perceived as dialects due to their low vitality and lower status in everyday life (Francard, 2013). However, "all are systems of communication shared by a linguistic community, of which the functioning and symbolic resources are well described by experts" (Francard, 2013, p. 39). There was thus a time that all these languages were equally spoken and received the same status as French. In practice, this is not the case anymore as the French language became the official language in all areas of society in Wallonia (Francard, 2013). Nonetheless, Walloon is still a topic of interest in the fields of linguistics and sociolinguistic due to the interesting language shift process and the diversity of the language and its use (Francard, 2009).



Image 1: This map of Wallonia shows the areas in which Picard, Gaumais, Champenois, and the four variations of Walloon are spoken (Francard, 2013).

Walloon was first recognized as an official language during the 13th century and was also used to some extent in written texts. By then, French was also already present in Wallonia but was mainly used as a written language in prestigious texts and spoken by the elite. During

the 16th century, this changed and French also become a commonly spoken language. Simultaneously, Walloon became a written language. These changes were however mainly relevant in cities and for higher classes of society as it took several decades for these developments to also reach lower classes of society and rural areas. At the end of the 19th century, bilingualism in Walloon and French was already commonplace, and around the 1930s, the number of Walloon-speakersstarted to drop drastically. This is a result of the implementation and domination of French in all aspects of communication which was perceived to be of better quality. Not only did Walloon become an endangered language, but it also became perceived as a low-status language (Francard, 2009). As a reaction to the loss of minority and regional languages, Walloon received the status of official regional language in 1991 through the *Council of endogenous regional languages* which was created to deal with all initiatives aiming at the maintenance and promotion of regional languages in Wallonia through various tools and actions. Its additional mission was, and still is, to support the European Charter for regional or minority Languages that Belgium did not sign in 1992 (Service des langues régionales endogènes, n.d.).

Today, Walloon is facing a low vitality and a regression of use in daily life, especially for younger generations to whom it is not transferred anymore. There are still a few individuals who speak the language, but there are no monolingual Walloon-speakersanymore. Furthermore, it is expected that the language has been best maintained in rural areas and that is mostly spoken by older generations. Despite this low vitality, it was evident that the language still has an important role in heritage and identity (impacts on local identity, local heritage, etc.). Therefore, there are processes and procedures to ensure a certain maintenance due to this raising awareness. These have changed from being perceived as 'crude' and 'incomprehensible' to become a point of interest filled with solidarity, conviviality, sympathy, etc. This changing dynamic does not ensure the use of regional languages in everyday life but does create a more positive relation to one's identity, one's heritage, and the re-emergence of lost linguistic skills which are all important for cultural identity. There remains thus a certain level of understanding despite the low level of speakers. A growing interest in the Walloon language was even noticed in multiple areas of society as a result of these efforts (Francard, 2013).

Walloon as a tourism resource

As Francard (2013) explains, there is also a good understanding of how Walloon remains relevant today despite the lack of daily use. It is still possible for individuals to be in contact with the language through media, art, folklore, traditions, and leisure and tourism (Francard, 2013). In Wallonia, tourism has received little attention as a way of promoting the Walloon language despite the already existing use of the language in certain tourism products. For example, the language is used in certain museums such as the *Museum of Walloon Life* and *Musée en Piconrue*, but also to name tourism businesses and tourism

products. Yet, when used for tourism, it remains limited to visible signs and bits of language. There is only one museum that still uses Walloon in a verbal form and that is at the *Espace Arthur Masson* museum. The language is then used during the tour and is accompanied by an English, Dutch, German or French version (Treignes, Village des Musées, 2019).

A recent project aiming at the promotion and revalorization of the Walloon language identified the tourism setting as one of the sectors through which this could be achieved. This project is called "*My municipality says 'Yes' to minority languages*" and consists of a network of municipalities and a label that aims at executing certain actions in favor of regional languages. The actions each municipality can take are categorized into four categories which are *communication*, *culture*, *education*, and as one category, *signage, economy and tourism*. In this last category, actions target the implementation of bilingual public signs (Walloon and French), storytelling experiences in Walloon, discovery itineraries about the local culture and heritage explained in Walloon, bilingual tourism brochures, flyers, booklets and documents, bilingual marketing strategies and bilingual labels on regional products (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, n.d.). However, what differentiates this category from the other three categories is that it not only targets locals but also tourists.

No study has looked at the attitude of locals towards this project. However, it was discussed previously why it is important to understand the local perspective on language commodification as the local community's support will most likely result in a successful application of the project. This study will, therefore, produce knowledge on the attitudes of locals towards the use of Walloon in tourism, and the outcomes could help project developers and tourism professionals to develop products that are more in line with the needs of the local community in the Belgian Ardennes (Muselaers, 2017).

Research questions

The main research question as well as the sub-questions of this study are based on the theoretical framework of this thesis. This brief section will first provide the main research question this study aims at answering, followed by the sub-questions and a brief explanation of how these will contribute to answering the main research question.

Research question

This study aims to better understand the way locals who live in the Belgian Ardennes perceive and experience the process that transforms their language into a commodity to be sold to tourists. Therefore, this study aims at answering the following research question:

How is the commodification of Walloon in the Ardennese tourism setting perceived by locals?

Sub-research questions

To answer this research question, three sub-questions were developed that each contribute to answering the main question to a specific extent. These sub-questions are as follows:

1. How does the local community perceive the value of (global and local) languages?
2. How does the local community define itself and what is the role of Walloon in this process?
3. How does the local community value the use of Walloon in tourism?

By answering the first sub-question, the aim is to develop a better understanding of how locals use the Walloon language, as well as other languages present in the region. More precisely, the first sub-question aims to build a picture of how locals relate to languages, whether regional, national or international, and how they value these especially in the tourism setting. This will help understand how languages are attributed a certain value and how these are used in the region and impacting the use of Walloon. The second sub-question looks at the way locals relate to the language, how they use it in the way they identify individually and culturally. It will also show whether there is an identity of which Walloon is part of and to what extent it is relevant in the identification process of the locals. It is expected that by answering this sub-question, it will become more evident how locals perceive the process of commodification of something that is part or not of their identity and culture. It is expected that the answer to this research question will further help understand the stance of locals regarding language commodification and language use in the tourism setting. The third

sub-question aims to understand the stance of locals regarding the commodification of regional languages for tourism purposes. More precisely, it looks at whether locals are aware of the process of regional language commodification in tourism and whether they would see it as an option in the Ardennes. It is expected that the way they perceive the commodification of language for tourism is affected by their relation to this language and tourism.

Methodology

This research is qualitative because it is concerned with understanding and interpreting the way individuals relate to the social world they live in (Bryman, 2012). More precisely, it focusses on the attitudes, ideas, opinions and perceptions of individuals from a community. It produces thus subjective data. Therefore, a case study design is more fitting for this kind of research (Adler & Clark, 2007). Case studies permit to look at a specific context from a holistic perspective without having to isolate the variables of interest. It is the interaction between these variables and the relationship between individuals and variables that is of interest, and permits to answer questions concerned with 'how' and 'why' (Adler & Clark, 2007). Case studies do however not permit the generalizability of the outcomes to other cases as it is often case-specific. Yet, they provide an in-depth understanding of the context which further contributes to the production of knowledge about general categories of the social world (Adler & Clark, 2007; Bryman, 2012). This design can thus produce knowledge to better understand the attitudes of the local community in the Belgian Ardennes towards the commodification of the Walloon language in tourism. Furthermore, it helps to collect novel and additional information on the use of regional languages in the tourism setting in general. The following section explains the data collection method, the stakeholders and sampling method, the research location, and finally the data analysis.

Data Collection

This research aims to understand the perspectives, ideas and opinions of individuals living in the Ardennes regarding the commodification of the Walloon language in tourism. To achieve this understanding of such personal and subjective information, the data collected needed to be detailed and rich. Therefore, doing interviews was chosen as research method to collect the data. Observational techniques were also used to collect data from a specific source of information, but this was only an additional method.

Interviews

To be valuable, the data needs to be rich and detailed and one of the most adequate methods to get this kind of data is through interviews. Adler and Clark (2007) explain that doing interviews makes it possible to get insights into an individual's perceptions and ideas, but also permit to take into consideration the individual's background. Interviews also do not restrain interviewees in their answers and let them use words they relate to. It is important for interviewees to feel free to tell their stories as this can be beneficial for the interpretation of the data during the data analysis (Adler & Clark, 2007). The data is thus constructed by the interviewee and the interviewer through the conversation they have (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

Choosing to use interviews to collect the data was based on the previous criteria. However, as Adler and Clark (2007) further explain, there are also drawbacks to consider when using interviews. As the aim is to collect rich and detailed data, this means also that the data is highly subjective. The research design of this study limits the outcomes to only be representative of a specific community and location. Interviews also take a lot of time to do and to transcribe which limits the data collection and the data collection period. As a result, it is difficult to generalize the findings to the rest of the population or to apply this research to other destinations. To deal to some extent with these issues, the sample was made as representative as possible by including a variety of individuals with different backgrounds to make it more generalizable to the rest of the population. The way the research was done can also be replicable at other destinations, but the specifics have to be adapted to the local context. Finally, this research produces knowledge that contributes to the understanding of theories and categories on the subject in general.

The interviews were intended to be semi-structured. The intention was to have some elements in each interview that could be compared with one another while letting the interviewees tell their story. Therefore, a list of questions was prepared to be able to achieve this (Bryman, 2012) (appendix: interview questions). The list of interview questions was divided into three parts based on the three different sub-research questions and was translated into Dutch and French. The first part focused on questions relating to the Ardennese identity and the role of Walloon in the Ardennese identity. The second part focused on questions relating to the use of languages in the area and the attitudes towards language diversity. The third part focused on questions relating to the use of Walloon in the field of tourism, as well as their opinion on this matter. Despite this preparation, the list of questions was used in every interview, but interviewees discussed the three topics in different orders and to different extents. The time spent on each part depended on the interests of each interviewee. For example, Walloon-speakerstended to spend more time on the first part, while those working in the field of tourism tended to spend more time on the third part. For some interviewees, the interview guide was necessary to either get the conversation started or to keep it going. Other interviewees were more open or had an easier time telling a story. This did affect the comparability of the outcomes, but it also ended up as being beneficial during the data analysis as valuable themes and ideas were discussed that would have been overlooked otherwise.

In total, thirteen interviews were collected and they lasted between thirty minutes and an hour and a half. At that point, the data started to saturate and was important enough to identify patterns (Hennink & al., 2017). The interviewees were informed about the general purpose of the research before starting the interview. They were further also informed about their right to participate, terminate the interview, skip questions, and ask questions at any time. The interviewees were also asked for permission to record the interview and all gave consent. Furthermore, no interviewee has been harmed or pressured in any way before, during or after the interviews.

Observation

An additional source of information was used to collect observational data. This method was chosen because a special event took place during the data collection period which only lasted one day. Observational techniques are beneficial if the aim is to understand why individuals have a certain behaviour or opinions in a specific context (Adler & Clark, 2007). Adler and Clark (2007) differentiate notes taken during the observations as thin or thick description. In this case, the descriptions were merely thin as they focused on the content of lectures, the behaviour of individuals during the event and the context, and not necessarily on the underlying intentions, motives and meanings behind these. Having a thin description is a result of a limited amount of time between the different lectures to observe individuals. Due to the lack of time and the obligation to remain silent during lectures, the opportunity to have short discussions with visitors was too little.

The event took place on the 18th of May 2019 at the Musée de la Vie Wallonne in Liège. This event focused on the future of regional languages in Wallonia. Although it did not discuss the Walloon language or the Belgian Ardennes, it was still a relevant event to attend as the development of the Walloon language is also the topic of this research. During the day, two different kinds of activities were offered. There was a conference consisting of three different lectures and there were artistic activities such as music, theatre and art. A choice was made to attend the conference as it was expected that important issues regarding the language's future would be discussed there. The first lecture addressed the issue of language disappearance, language maintenance and the future of regional languages. During this lecture, five experts of other European regional languages spoke about theirs, how it was maintained and the vision for the future. This was followed by Q&A sessions in which all participants were invited to ask their questions. All lectures and short discussions took place in French and not in Walloon.

The data collected through observations was written down but was not used in the data analysis. The observational data was not perceived as relevant enough to answer the research question of this thesis. This is because the theme of tourism was only mentioned a couple of times and not further discussed during the lectures, and the Ardennese community was under-represented compared to the community of the region in which the event took place. To better understand why this choice was made, the 'limitations' section in the discussion chapter explains why this choice was made and the 'observational data' section in the appendix shows the collected data. Omitting the observational data did however not lower the quality of this research as it was just an additional source of information.

Sample and Population

The relevant stakeholders of this study are the locals living in the Belgian Ardennes. As was already discussed by Salazar and Graburn (2014), this stakeholder group is not

homogenous as it consists of individuals with different backgrounds, layers and interests making it a diverse cluster of groups. Although these aspects are important to take into consideration, the Ardennese community was grouped into four stakeholder types: those who are directly involved in the tourism industry and those who are not, those who speak Walloon and those who do not.

Those who are directly involved in tourism are often business owners (accommodation, catering, recreational, shops, transportation), DMO's and residents providing services to tourists (CGT & OwT, 2019). Additionally, the Federation du Tourisme en Luxembourg Belge (FTLB) is directly involved in creating, developing and promoting tourism in the region. The FTLB is also well aware of trends and projects in the promotion of tourism and thus also in the use of Walloon in tourism. These stakeholders are valuable as they have insights into the tourism industry and are influenced by tourism in their daily life. The second group is locals not directly involved in the tourism industry. This means that they do not provide services to tourists. Although this group is not directly influenced by tourism, tourism is an industry that affects the entire community. As Mansfeld & Ginosar (1994) suggest, it is expected that those who are not directly involved in tourism will tend to have more negative attitudes towards tourism development and the commodification of cultural resources than those who have a stronger connection to tourism. Therefore, this differentiation between locals involved or not in tourism is relevant in this research as it can influence the attitudes and perceptions of individuals.

The sampling method used for this research was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a method that uses already available individuals to the researcher (Adler & Clark, 2007). The fifteen interviewees were contacted through different mediums. The first person contacted was the representative of the FTLB. Early on, an email was sent to him to set an appointment, which only took place several weeks later during the data collection period. This interview lasted over 90 minutes and focused on the third sub-research question of this research. The other interviewees were contacted two weeks before the data collection period. First, a Facebook post was created attempting to reach a large number of possible respondents. Unexpectedly, only two people responded on the post. Shortly after, a meeting was set up with each respondent. The twelve other interviewees were found by personally contacting them. By using convenience sampling, which is a non-random sampling method, the possibility of bias was also involved which reduces the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the research (Adler & Clark, 2007). Therefore, the sample was made as diverse as possible.

In total, thirteen interviews were done with 15 interviewees. Only two interviews had more than one interviewee participating. Being a resident in the Ardennes was the only requirement for interviewees to take part in this research. Out of the fifteen interviewees, seven were man and eight were women. All interviewees were older than 18. Four of the respondents were between 18 and 30 years old, six interviewees were between 30 and 60 years old and five were between 60 and 90 years old. Only five of the interviewees spoke

Walloon fluently, but all of the interviewees spoke French. However, two interviews were done in Dutch as that was the language the interviewees felt more comfortable speaking in. These two respondents did not originate from the Ardennes but have been living there for over 25 years. Out of the fifteen interviewees, seven had or were currently working in the tourism industry.

Research location

The focus of this study is on the locals who live in the Belgian Ardennes, a region in the south of Belgium. This region is part of a larger transnational region called the Ardennes which regroups a part of the province of Liege, the province of Namur and the province of Luxembourg in Belgium, the northern part of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the department of the Ardennes in France (Larousse, n.d.). However, the Walloon language is only relevant in the Belgian part.

On the national and international level, this region is mainly known as a tourism destination. There are two important types of tourism in the Ardennes, nature and cultural tourism. The region is especially known as a rural tourism destination which is a form of tourism that is located in rural areas, tends to be small-scale and is focussed on developing sustainably through relying on the natural and cultural resources available (Lane, 1994). The Ardennes relies thus on natural resources such as forests, valleys, rivers and hills to provide nature and nature-based tourism activities to tourists who seek to relax, sport or reconnect with nature. The region also relies on its rich history, heritage, gastronomy and culture (folklore, traditions, events, etc.). Tourism started to develop in the Ardennes at the end of the 19th century due to the interest of urban and higher class tourists seeking to experience the picturesque Ardennes. Today, it attracts about 29 % of all tourists visiting the south of Belgium (CGT & OwT, 2019).



Image 2: Map of Belgium, its neighboring countries and the location of the Belgian Ardennes region in light green (Site officiel du tourisme du Luxembourg Belge en Ardenne, n.d.).



Image 3: Map of the Belgian Ardennes and each of its different areas and towns (Fédération du Tourisme en Luxembourg Belge, 2018).

The Ardennes region is relevant for this study for several reasons. First of all, three municipalities who joined the "*My municipality says 'Yes' to minority languages*" project are located in this region. There is thus an interest of municipalities in the Ardennes to preserve and revalorize Walloon through tourism (and other sectors). Secondly, this region is relevant because it is expected that rural areas are there where the Walloon language has been best preserved due to the slower changes over time (Francard, 2013). Finally, the Ardennes is the main touristic region of Wallonia and it attracts the highest number of tourists (CGT & OwT, 2019). Yet, despite the importance of the industry in the region, it has received little attention from tourism research. Some studies were made about the region, but these do not contribute to this topic as they either focus on marketing, statistics or the process of tourism development (CGT & OwT, 2019). The aspect of Walloon use in the tourism setting remains unresearched and the attitudes of the local community towards tourism development in the Ardennes as well. Therefore, this study will contribute in multiple ways to better understand how locals relate to tourism development in this region, how locals relate to the Walloon language, and ultimately, how locals perceive the use of Walloon in the tourism setting. This information can then be used by organizations involved in the development of tourism in the Ardennes, but also for other regions of Wallonia, to use in adequate ways the language in the tourism offer. This will be more in line with the local community's expectations and image, and thus, be more sustainable (Timothy, 2011).

Data Analysis

After doing the interviews and structuring the observational data, the next step was to transcribe all interviews to be able to use them for the analysis section. For the interviews, intelligent verbatim and edited transcription were used to transcribe the data (Streefkerk, 2019). Intelligent verbatim refers to the transcription of every word except for pauses,

emotions, hesitations and fillers like ‘uh’ or ‘hum’. Additionally, parts of the interviews in which the interviewee deviated from the subject and that this deviation did not contribute to better understanding the context were not written down. This is what is called edited transcription. Furthermore, parts of interviews in which the Walloon language was used by interviewees were translated when possible by using an online Walloon-French dictionary. However, the online dictionary did not have all the words of all Walloon dialects listed and thus could not translate some of the words used during the interviews. Additionally, it was sometimes difficult to identify the words used by the interviewees in Walloon and thus, could not always be translated either. This did not have important consequences for the outcomes of this research.

After transcribing, it was also necessary to reduce the amount of data collected to focus on the data relevant to answer the research questions. The data reduction process was done by thematic analysis. Although the data reduction process gives a certain clarity in the important amount of data collected, it also affects the results, discussion and conclusion sections of the research. It should thus be done carefully (Adler & Clark, 2007).

To analyse the reduced data, a coding system was used. The coding system was developed based on the three sub-research questions (chapter 4), and more precisely, the different themes each of these sub-questions focus on. For each sub-question, each theme had a code. By dividing the reduced data into sub-questions and then into themes, a structure could be given to the data analysis section. Themes for the first sub-question related to data relating to ‘Walloon as the regional language’ and ‘national and international languages’. Themes for the second sub-question related to ‘personal relations to the Walloon language’ and ‘regional identity and the Walloon language’. Themes for the third sub-question related to ‘perceived value of tourism’, ‘perceived current role of Walloon in tourism’, ‘perceived value of Walloon in tourism’ and ‘perceived impacts of Walloon use in tourism’. Parts of data were categorized based on the words and expressions used by the interviewees. The coding was mostly systematic. However, some of the data was not relevant for the sub-research questions but was relevant for the main research question. This data was added when writing the data analysis section.

Results

The data in the following section is a result of the data reduction and the thematic analysis. The data is organised in three parts based on the sub-questions of this thesis (chapter 4). The first part focusses on identifying the role and value of languages in the Ardennes and the dynamic between them. The second part focusses on the value and role of Walloon in the identification process of individuals and the cultural identity. The third part focusses on the perception of locals regarding the use of Walloon in the tourism setting. Each section consists of several sub-topics that were identified throughout the theming process and that will come back in the discussion chapter. Finally, as quotes are used to illustrate the results, the following table provides a list of interviewees and their characteristics to help contextualise these quotes.

Referred to as:	Gender	Age	Walloon-speaker	Direct relation to tourism	Resident time in the Ardennes
Interviewee 1	Male	86	Yes	No	25 years
Interviewee 2	Female	57	No	No	27 years
Interviewee 3	Female	55	No	Yes	55 years
Interviewee 4	Male	24	No	No	24 years
Interviewee 5	Female	75	Yes	No	75 years
Interviewee 6	Male	48	No	Yes	n.d.
Interviewee 7	Female	23	No	No	23 years
Interviewee 8	Male	24	No	No	24 years
Interviewee 9	Female	n.d.	No	No	11 years
Interviewee 10	Male	63	Yes	No	63 years
Interviewee 11	Female	58	No	Yes	58 years
Interviewee 12	Female	18	No	Yes	18 years
Interviewee 13	Female	52	No	Yes	27 years
Interviewee 14	Male	43	Yes	Yes	43 years
Interviewee 15	Male	62	Yes	Yes	62 years

How does the local community perceive the value of (global and local) languages?

Walloon as the regional language

The Walloon language is still perceived as relevant in the region to some extent, but its perceived relevance seems to vary from one person to the other, more precisely between Walloon-speakers and non-speakers. All Walloon-speakers amongst the participants agreed that the language conveys different meanings than French does such as simplicity, humbleness, etc. Older Walloon-speakers also perceived the language as richer, more expressive and more meaningful than French. Additionally, the language is relevant from a heritage point of view but this is not its perceived main value.

"If everyone here would speak Walloon, I'd speak Walloon. But unfortunately, there aren't many of them. Because I like it, it's pleasant. Well, I don't know, it's a special language. For me, although it's not more special than any other I guess, but I mean for me it is", Interviewee 10.

Those amongst the interviewees who do not speak Walloon find the language to have a special value but do not emphasize this richness and meaningfulness. However, half of the non-speakers still find the language to have certain meanings or added value that the French language does not have.

"Maybe yes, it conveys certain, I'm not going to say value, but I don't know... With Walloon, there are still a lot of expressions so when you use an expression, it also transmits a bit your way of thinking or your way of seeing things", Interviewee 4.

Non-speakers agreed that the language has primarily a cultural and heritage-related value. It is part of the local culture and the local community through history, traditions, customs, etc. In that sense, they perceive it as relevant today.

"It's village-related heritage and I think we shouldn't forget these things. I think it's the same for the language, you shouldn't forget that it has existed. That it is part of the people who lived here", Interviewee 12.

Yet, due to its limited use and the limited understanding of it by the majority of the community, the language is not perceived as relevant communicatively. Non-speakers also associate the language with older generations. Additionally, compared to Walloon speakers, non-speakers amongst the interviewees seem to have less knowledge about the language and

its history, and some even confused the Walloon language with current varieties of French.

There are a few settings in which a couple of Walloon-speakers and non-speakers amongst the participants perceived the language to be still used. Those who were not informed about these activities perceived the language not to be used in the everyday setting at all. Settings in which the language is used are often initiatives that attempt to promote and maintain the Walloon language through entertainment. Certain Walloon-speakers were better informed about these activities than non-speakers but only one of them mentioned using and attending these initiatives. Yet, it is perceived by the informed interviewees that these activities are mostly attended by Walloon-speakers and older generations as others are perceived to either not understand the language or not interested in attending. The reach of these activities is thus perceived as too limited. The other setting in which the language is still perceived as relevant is the family setting, but this is also perceived as having a limited reach. Walloon-speakers perceive non-speakers and young generations as not being interested in learning the language anymore. For the majority of non-speakers, it is perceived to be the stop in transmission by parents and grandparents rather than the non-interest in the language. Yet, speakers and non-speakers agree that it relates to the perceived low vitality and uselessness of the Walloon language, and its limited relevance on just the local and regional scale. The result is that the language is not perceived by interviewees as valuable enough to be learnt or actively maintained. It has thus no instrumental value and is not perceived as a priority by both the Walloon-speakers and non-speakers amongst the participants.

> *"And Walloon will lead to nothing. […] And for the moment, people are willing to spend time or money on something they think will be interesting for their studies, for their body, and Walloon has no role in that",* Interviewee 3.

A couple of speakers and non-speakers also mentioned that the language is used the most in rural areas. The rural setting is perceived by all respondents to be the best setting to maintain the language as cities are already too disconnected from it and rural areas have closer communities. Yet, even there, its use remains limited.

All interviewees perceived the disappearance of the language to be inevitable and all of them also found it regrettable, but to different extents. This is perceived to further lead to the loss of cultural and heritage related aspects such as expressions and traditions. Yet, as three-fourth of interviewees perceived the cultural value of the language as not strong enough to maintain it, about a fourth of the interviewees said that the language will survive through traditions, heritage and expressions, but also through the French language.

> *"It will survive because anyone can relearn to speak it since there are writings anyway. So you see, some traditions get lost and then 20 years later, there are a few young people who say 'Oh, well, we should put that back*

together. Our parents used to talk about how it existed in the past and we would like to do it again'. There will always be people of goodwill or with ideas who will have time to give to help save this", Interviewee 15.

National and international languages

For all interviewees, French is recognized as the dominant language in the Ardennes. It is today the language used for communication. Compared to the Walloon language, French can be used in all areas of society whether it is in education, culture (art, media, etc.), on the job market, and to some extent, also internationally. Additionally, one interviewee explained that all Walloon-speakers also speak French which makes it the lingua franca and facilitates communication.

"I think that to be able to talk to each other, I think it's better to unify than to have all kinds of little dialects and so on. That's it. That's my more practical side in the sense that it's easier to communicate with one language than 36", Interviewee 11.

This is what makes the language be perceived as more valuable than Walloon. Furthermore, despite its instrumental and international value, one-fourth of the interviewees added that the language is experiencing a lowering in quality. It should, therefore, be prioritized in education to tackle this issue. Three of the middle-aged interviewees further also explain that it is important to speak French for those who speak other languages and want to become residents in the Ardennes. This is because French is the language of communication and is needed to be able to integrate into the local community. Not doing so is perceived by these interviewees as creating a gap between the local community and newcomers. Two interviewees also mentioned that locals tend to perceive French as an international language. They are, therefore, not motivated to learn other languages whether it is for tourism or doing international business.

"It's important for those who are in tourism and in industry, well in some industries, not all. For those who don't need it, no, languages are not... In absolute terms it's very important, I think. But I don't need them daily. So if I hadn't learned any language, it wouldn't bother me on a daily basis", Interviewee 14.

The second most common language in the Ardennes is Dutch. Dutch is perceived as important as a majority of tourists are Dutch-speaking. Despite being so important, it is still not perceived by the interviewees as well taught in education, and thus not well spoken by the local community. Another important national language is German, but it was only mentioned by two interviewees. Although it is perceived to be spoken only by a small

proportion of the Ardennese population, it is an important language for tourism. Despite both Dutch and German being perceived as instrumental languages, they are not perceived as having international reach. They are thus beneficial for tourism purposes and national business, but not internationally.

> *"But yeah, it's maybe a bit of a shame that we don't speak more Flemish, but I turned to English because it was more of a draw than Flemish. Flemish, apart from in Flanders and the Netherlands, I think that's about it. Whereas English, you speak it almost everywhere",* Interviewee 4.

English is perceived as the main international language by all interviewees. It is perceived as the language having the most global reach. However, similarly to Dutch and German, English is also not perceived as well taught in education and thus not well spoken by the local community. Interviewees found that the language was also not spoken enough despite its potential for tourism, international business and job opportunities. Therefore, interviewees agreed that the language should be prioritized in education. Furthermore, English has been associated with younger generations by one interviewee who explained that this is because:

> *"There is very little knowledge of languages* [in the local community]*, well I would say like Dutch and English, but young people do. Because now more and more emphasis is being put on the learning of languages, and that is important if you want to move around and go a bit further",* Interviewee 11.

Finally, at least half of the interviewees mentioned how Dutch and English should be prioritized in education, so it can be used in tourism. They perceive the lack of linguistic skills to impact tourist experiences in negative ways and this can impact the development of tourism and the region. These languages are perceived as vital to welcome tourists.

> *"There are still many who don't even speak… Certain restaurant owners don't even speak the language* [Dutch and English]. *Or maybe there is only one in the restaurant who speaks the language and the rest are students who are not motivated or do not understand the importance of tourism here in the Ardennes. It still creates a lot of jobs. We must not forget that",* Interviewee 15.

It was also mentioned by the two locals who perceived newcomers to have to learn French for efficient communication, that it is important for tourists to learn French because it will make traveling in the region easier. They do not perceive it as relevant to learn other languages such as Dutch or English themselves to welcome visitors.

"It's for them actually. It's for them to get by, not us. If they don't know how to speak French and they come to ask me for directions or something, I'll try to explain it to them with my hands or I don't know...", Interviewee 10.

How does the local community define itself and what is the role of Walloon in this process?

Personal relation to the Walloon language

Out of the fifteen interviewees, five respondents perceived themselves as being Walloon-speakers. They ranged from 43 to 86 years old. All of them learned the language by hearing it in their direct environment such as in their neighbourhood or village or the family setting. Yet, none of them learnt it in school. There are also different levels of fluency which is a result of speakers being unable to practice.

"But even I, who already understand it well, find that I don't understand everything. But talking about it is even harder because to make a conversation I have to think. An expression or a word comes by itself, but for a conversation, yes, you have to think about it", Interviewee 14.

All Walloon speaking interviewees perceived speaking Walloon as being natural and they like to hear and speak it when they can. Yet, none of the Walloon speaking interviewees found the language to be an aspect of their identity or identification process.

Furthermore, for Walloon-speakers amongst the participants, speaking the language has various meanings. First of all, it has a strong connection to family, home and the past, which can be associated with nostalgia. It can create a sense of group belongingness because speakers can only speak the language with a small number of individuals. Speakers are also proud to be able to speak the language.

"But I'm proud. No… I'm not going to say proud… But I am! To still speak Walloon. I speak it with people who still speak it. I still speak it properly!", Interviewee 15.

For non-speakers, their connection to the language is less clear and not emotionally-driven. At first, the interviewees did not find the language to have a place in their life and would still agree at the end of the interview that it still doesn't. However, throughout the interview, each interviewee started to find anecdotes about memories and experiences that related to the language and most even knew certain words and expressions. Similar to

Walloon speakers, these experiences, memories and words come from the family setting through parents or grandparents.

> "*My dad spoke Walloon, my mom didn't, but she wasn't from here. And I have never, I speak a few words. But no, I don't speak Walloon at all*", Interviewee 11.

Other associations made to the language but that were less reoccurring were the perceived belongingness of speakers to the Walloon speaking community, but also negative ones such as its lack of aesthetic. However, these were not dominant views. Additionally, none of the non-speakers perceived the language to be part of their identity or identification process either.

Regional identity and the Walloon language

The majority of interviewees identified themselves as being Ardennese, one identified as being from a neighbouring region, one identified as being Belgian, and three identified as being Dutch or partly Dutch. Interviewees who were born in the Ardennes and identified as Ardennese emphasized that being an Ardennese differs from being Walloon or Belgian as the regional identity has different meanings. Interviewees who did not identify as Ardennese explained that they will never be Ardennese due to the difficulty to be accepted as Ardennese by the Ardennese community.

In being Ardennese there seems to be the idea that one needs to be born in the region and needs to share some of the connexions and traits part of the identity such as nature, rurality, strength, pride, etc. The Ardennese identity is also perceived to be a mentality, a way to see the world, a personality, or even a reflection of the environment in one's personality.

> *"Yes, I feel Ardennese. For me the Ardennes is more a connotation of nature, I think so. And because of that, yes, I do feel Ardennese. And also because of my character. People from the Ardennes are a bit stubborn, maybe I'm a bit stubborn",* Interviewee 11.

Older interviewees explain that this is however changing, that people have different lifestyles and priorities, which makes the Ardennese identity disappear.

> *"But this is not the case anymore now, I think. But that's my point of view, right. I don't think there's an identity spirit anymore", Interviewee 5.*

Yet, younger interviewees did also perceive themselves as being Ardennese. This shows that the Ardennese identity is also evolving and adapting to changes in society.

In this Ardennese identity, Walloon does not have a role as interviewees say the

language is also relevant in the rest of Wallonia and besides, it is not spoken by the community anymore. Yet, one-fourth of the interviewees mentioned that speaking the language could be perceived as reinforcing the Ardennese identity.

> *"Maybe a little more, maybe a little more yes. Now you don't have to speak Walloon to feel Ardennese. That's for sure. Now, yes, the one who speaks it, because in my opinion, those who still speak it... [...] No, I think it's still the Ardennese trait that is important",* Interviewee 4.

Furthermore, certain interviewees identified a connection between the language and the region in the sense that speaking the language is associated with rurality or that certain expressions, words, or accents are only used in the Ardennes.

More than half of the interviewees also discussed a personal relation to the local context or perceived certain localities to be important. For interviewees who did not feel attached to their village or town, they mentioned that some places did have a strong local attachment but that they, themselves, had not experienced this in their village or town. Those who did feel attached to their localities, which was more than two-thirds of the interviewees, related local attachment to a sense of community attachment and involvement, local matters, family and 'feeling home'. Yet, speaking Walloon was not part of it.

> *"I feel more Ardennese than* [name of those living in a specific village]. *Yes. I indeed know almost all people from* [village name] *now, maybe a little less the new people. Now I'm not going to say that I miss it and say, 'I'm going to say hello to such and such person'. But hey, it's [*village name*]. This is my home. It'll always be my home",* Interviewee 4.

Although Walloon was perceived by Walloon-speakers as contributing to the local identity in the past, this is not perceived to be relevant today anymore. However, despite not being perceived as relevant, the Walloon language was mentioned several times by speakers and non-speakers to still be relevant in the local culture through place names. This shows that the language is still relevant and part of the local culture without being perceived as part of the local identity.

> *"It's like the little path that goes from* [village name] *to* [village name]*, it's the 'Voye Di Messe'. It has always been the 'Voye Di Messe' and I will always call it the 'Voye Di Messe'. When you want to talk to someone about that little road nearby you say 'Voye Di Messe' because that's what it's always been called",* Interviewee 4.

How does the local community value the use of Walloon in tourism?

Perceived value of tourism

When asked whether interviewees related to tourism, eight interviewees perceived themselves as not and seven perceived themselves as directly involved or involved in the past in tourism. However, all of them had dealt with tourism at some point in the Ardennes whether it is through where they live or work, and in positive or negative ways. No matter the experiences, all interviewees agreed that tourism was important for the development of the region, especially from an economic point of view.

> *"Well, tourism is always a bit complicated because, on the one hand, they destroy all the peace and quiet that there is in the Ardennes, but on the other hand they are the ones who keep it alive. Well, that's what's a bit ... Yes, it is necessary otherwise the local economy is struggling",* Interviewee 7.

Furthermore, seven interviewees used tourism as a way of describing the region which shows that tourism has an important value for the region. While those who perceived themselves as involved in tourism directly associated the region to tourism, those who were not involved in tourism did not do so at first but associated the region to tourism further throughout the interviews. For those who perceived themselves as directly involved in tourism, their relationship to it was more personal. Not only did they perceive tourism to be an important aspect of the region, but also their personal development.

> *"[…] tourists eventually bring something. If we didn't have tourists, we wouldn't be able to make a living either. That's true because there were people from the village, of course, they would go out, and you had the youth, they had a bit of pocket money, but they weren't the ones who spent a lot. The ones we made a living from were the tourists.",* Interviewee 5.

While the majority of interviewees did not discuss the development of tourism, two of the interviewees explained that it is important that tourism keeps developing. It should better promote the cultural and natural resources available. They perceive the area to be full of potential which is currently not well developed and not focussing on long-term development. Yet, long-term planning is needed if rural areas want to remain viable without depending on tourism.

> *"Anyway, it's a beautiful area. It's a natural region with enormous potential. A region where there is the possibility to do a lot of things, there are a lot of things to develop. Yes, especially in tourism, also to make people stay and*

avoid going to cities", Interviewee 11.

Perceived current role of Walloon in tourism

At the moment, the Walloon language is not perceived by the interviewees as being used in the tourism setting as a communicative tool. French is. Furthermore, the Walloon language is perceived by most interviewees as not being part of the tourism demand, nor as a commodity. Additionally, only one interviewee who speaks Walloon and is not related to tourism discussed some tourism products or activities using the language. This one interviewee explained that she thinks tourists are not interested in seeing something typical like this.

"But I don't come across many of them [tourists]*, I don't have any accommodation, I don't have much contact with tourists in fact. So, I don't know what they're asking for. But I don't think they come here looking for typical things like that. I don't think they do",* Interviewee 3.

The other person who was aware of tourism offers including Walloon was the tourism expert. The tourism representative identified certain museums to still use the language as a tourism product, but these are perceived as exceptions and having a too specific target group. These museums tend to focus on the Ardennese or Walloon identity or focus on other cultural, historic and heritage-related products. Furthermore, the tourism representative does also think it attracts inbound tourists, as well as Walloon and Ardennese tourists living abroad which is not very diverse.

"That's what I was saying earlier, it's the French who are very curious and then the natives. It is a big hit with people who still speak a bit of Walloon. […] Clearly, there is not a huge demand, but on the other hand, there is no doubt, a small demand for authenticity.", Interviewee 6.

He further explains that tourism businesses do not perceive the added value of using Walloon and therefore, are not confident using it.

"But on the other hand, the tourism actors probably don't perceive the added value that this could bring, you see. So it's probably not sufficiently exploited", Interviewee, 6.

Perceived value of Walloon in tourism

At first, eight of the interviewees perceived it as interesting to use the Walloon language in tourism. Additionally, all these interviewees immediately added that the language

should not be used as a way to communicate, but should remain superficial. One interviewee did not answer the question but mentioned how it could be valuable to have signs and place names written in Walloon. The other six interviewees said the language would not be interesting to use in tourism. However, three of them changed their minds the more they reflected on the topic. In total, twelve of the fifteen interviewees explained that they would perceive it as interesting as long as it remains superficially used. Only three interviewees who said they would not perceive it as interesting stuck to their initial answer mainly because they did not perceive it as adding any value to the current tourism offer or region, or because they perceived the language as too far gone.

> *"It's interesting, it's fun, it's for the curious ones. For those who love this culture or language and want to maintain it, yes, why not. And to maintain it and to pass it on from generation to generation. But not to reintroduce it into tourism. Yes, the street names would be fun, but it's not so... I don't know, it's... No, for me it's not that interesting",* Interviewee, 11.

Furthermore, it seems that being a Walloon-speaker or not, does not affect whether one is more likely to be interested in using the language in tourism as two-thirds of each group were supportive. Additionally, there were more interviewees involved in tourism saying they would not perceive it as interesting (two out of seven interviewees) than interviewees not involved in tourism (one out of eight). Yet, it is difficult to discern a pattern.

When interviewees discussed using the Walloon language in tourism, they only supported it if it was done in a superficial way and the most common way mentioned to do so, was through signage and place-naming. This means mainly adding the Walloon names of specific places, villages, towns, streets and businesses along with the French version already existing on signs.

> *"Like you said, the names of streets, the names of towns, I think that would be one of the easiest things to do. I think for the history of our villages and towns it would be nice too.* […] *But I think that with history it would be interesting. And again, culture and especially history, heritage and culture",* Interviewee 12.

Other examples mentioned by interviewees are recipes and menus that could be rewritten in Walloon. Legends, which are very important for the local culture could be written in Walloon. Local brands, stores and products could receive a Walloon name. Additionally, one interviewee also explained that if the language is to be used in tourism, it should not only remain superficial, but it should also be done in an interesting and entertaining way.

> *"Super fun. But you have to do it in a... If you do it in combination with*

tourism, then you have to do it in a touristic way. Not in a dictionary way ... I don't know. It has to be challenging and interesting for the tourist", Interviewee 2.

Another interviewee added that it should be done in a subtle way and not be over-exploited.

"Yeah, it's tricky. Yeah, but I don't know how to approach it. It's something to think about because... Yes, it would please me, but without exploiting it too commercially", Interviewee 15.

One interviewee also mentioned that to be successful, using Walloon in tourism should be done in a way that it not only targets tourists but also locals.

"That would be original, but insofar as it's a business that's as much for the locals. For the locals, the fact that it's Walloon is good. As for others, the fact that it's written in French or another language, they'll be interested. Because if it's only written in Walloon, they won't know what it means. So, it's rather original for to the locals", Interviewee 14.

All interviewees who perceived the Walloon language to be valuable for tourism added that a French translation is needed with the Walloon version of any of the examples mentioned previously. Other possible languages in which text should be translated are English, Dutch and German which would target tourists.

"Yes, or reintegrate it like in the presentation or something like that, but with a translation of course. Translation into French, translation into Dutch, translation into German and English", Interviewee 11.

This is to ensure that people will understand the story, the context or the indications, and not create confusion or logistic problems. Furthermore, this is important because the interviewees do not perceive it as necessary that tourists and locals learn the language to understand the context.

The tourism expert also mentioned important considerations to touristify the language in the tourism setting. However, it diverges from the perspective of the local community, involved in tourism or not. He stresses the importance of developing and improving the aspects of storytelling and scenarisation which are important to make the Walloon language interesting for tourists.

"We talked about it, but like so many times in the Walloon tourism industry, it is difficult to put it into practice. So, there is a real difficulty in putting into

action the aspect of staging, scriptwriting, storytelling. So, how we tell the story to the tourist using Walloon", Interviewee 6.

He explains that the language could be used in different ways by crossing different fields with that of tourism and linguistics, such as archaeology, history, pop-culture, or nature for example. Different examples mentioned by the expert are using stories and legends on street walls and in the natural environment, using Walloon speaking characters who represent the local culture on walking trails, incorporating pop-culture themes in rural and natural settings such as series or literature which focus on the Celtic and Gallic culture, and also use the language more often in the War setting such as in museums or near monuments. Finally, he suggests using the language as a theme for an entire touristic town or village in the Ardennes where it would be done 'all the way'. Local business owners could even learn a few words or sentences to be more representative.

The expert thus perceives the language to be interesting for tourism not only as a commodity but also to some extent, as a communicative tool and that does not match the local community's perspective. All the other interviewees agreed that they would not recommend the Walloon language to be used as a communicative language in the Ardennes.

"… I can't visualize a situation where it might be interesting in the sense that most tourists, well, yes, the vast majority of tourists come from other regions that don't speak Walloon at all. […] But the fact of speaking Walloon, they won't understand anything. I don't see what it could bring at this level", Interviewee 14.

This is because the interviewees did not perceive tourists nor enough locals to speak the language which would become problematic as they would not be able to understand written text or conversations. Additionally, the expert explains that the use of the language in tourism should not be overexploited, but his examples are already more developed than that of the local community.

"But it shouldn't be exploited in a heavily, that people at the end say to themselves, 'Well, I don't want to visit anything anymore because I don't understand anything'. But to have something that is more in line with our roots. Something more rooted, more connected to the men and women who make this region", Interviewee 6.

Perceived impacts of Walloon use in tourism

The interviewees, whether Walloon-speaker or non-speaker, did not perceive the use of the Walloon language in tourism as capable of bringing it back to an instrumental language. Interviewees think it is too late for the language to come back to what it used to be. However,

it is perceived as able to revalorize the language as cultural heritage, which would give the language a symbolic value by the majority.

> *"Well, I think we're already so far away that it might become folkloric again. To say that in 50 years from now everyone will speak Walloon at home and speak French when they're away, I don't think so. But it's a pity, I regret it, but I don't think it's possible. […] So the folkloric and cultural aspect will be present, but the utilitarian aspect takes over, so that's what I mean"*, Interviewee 14.

A couple of interviewees perceived it as capable to raise appreciation and awareness of its disappearance. Others further added that it could bring people closer to their identity, origins and roots, even for younger generations. Additionally, one Walloon-speaking interviewee mentioned that to use Walloon in tourism correctly, a special focus should be put on correcting mistakes (incorrect location names, incorrect spellings, etc.) which have been transmitted from the past and are still being transmitted today. He perceived tourism as having to ensure correct transmission of cultural heritage.

> *"When I see names of places, even parcel names, the guy* [who did that]*, I'm not going to say I cry, but every time I see he wrote it the way he thought it was written. But there are mistakes everywhere. But then, that's what lingers, the mistake is reproduced",* Interviewee 1.

Finally, only the tourism expert perceives it as capable of contributing to economic development. Other interviewees explain that they don't expect to see an increase in tourist numbers because of the use of Walloon in tourism and that using the language to create profit would not match the needs and values of the local community.

> *"[...] how to exploit, but in a broader way than tourism. It's true that here you have to cross the cultural, social and touristic worlds let's say. Also, economic because the economy could benefit a bit more by using Walloon terms",* Interviewee 6.

This valorisation of the Walloon language is perceived by all interviewees, whether Walloon speaking or not, to be more beneficial for the local community than for visitors. More than half of the interviewees expect the benefits of using Walloon in tourism to be mostly for Walloon-speakers as they have a stronger connection to the language compared to non-speakers. However, this can also impact in a positive way the connection non-speakers have with the language as the increased contact with Walloon can change their attitudes. Yet, it is perceived as unlikely that they will learn to speak Walloon. Walloon-speakers amongst the

interviewees did not, however, say that the impacts of this process would be most relevant for them but said it could indeed raise interest within the local community. One interviewee further also mentioned that those involved in tourism would also benefit from the use of Walloon in tourism. However, this was not mentioned by any of the other interviewees, nor by those involved in tourism.

To be successful, two interviewees explained that the way the language is used in tourism and other tourism-related projects need to match the needs and values of the local community, but should also be better organized to be more sustainable and in line with the local community.

> *"Well, I think it's great that there are plans because if there are no plans, it's dying [the region]. […] We need projects that respect the local, respect what already exists. We need innovation as well. But it must not be too much either, it must not be too invasive in relation to the population and life. And on the other hand, if we want our countryside to continue living, we need to develop things. So we need to bring in people, or at least potential clients. So we don't have much choice. I think it's very nice but in an organized way and not too exaggerated",* Interviewee 11.

One of them also mentioned the importance of not overdoing the utilisation of Walloon in tourism and not be motivated by profit as this will push people further from the Walloon language reducing its current value. Additionally, when asked whether it should come from the local community, the interviewee answered:

> *"Yeah, to keep it in people's genes a little bit. Whereas when it's commercial, it's out of your genes. It's more of a natural thing, it's commercial. That's it! It's commercial, that's the way it is with everything",* Interviewee 15.

The tourism expert explains that the reason the local community does not exploit better the language is that they are proud of their culture and the language, and do not want to commodify it. This was not mentioned to be the case by other interviewees. The expert further suggests that there needs to be a balance when using Walloon in tourism, where the language is commodified but does not look commodified so that it remains in-line with the values of the local community.

There are also certain perceived benefits for tourists as it is perceived that although the interviewees do not think it will necessarily add value to their experience, they think it might be perceived as attractive, intriguing, charming, unusual, traditional if it is done in a way that invites the tourist. Yet, it is not perceived as capable to attract more visitors, and if it is not well managed and made attractive to tourists, it is perceived as capable to impact their experience in negative ways which might even push tourists away. To take into

consideration as well, it was perceived that Walloon and French-speaking tourists would be more likely to be interested in the use of Walloon in tourism.

Discussion

Overall, it can be said that the local community tends to have a positive attitude towards the commodification of Walloon in tourism, but it is not always perceived as beneficial or contributing to tourism or regional development by all members of the community. This is related to certain factors that seem to influence attitudes, sometimes even on a bigger scale. First of all, the way locals value languages and linguistic diversity was found to be contributing to the linguistic dynamic at the destination influencing the perceived value of regional languages in tourism. Secondly, the way locals associate with the language was also found to influence their attitudes towards the commodification process of regional languages. Finally, certain conditions need to be met for the commodification of regional languages to be valuable and meaningful in tourism. These aspects will be discussed in the following section that combines the results of the data analysis and the literature from chapter two and chapter three.

The value of functional and symbolic languages

There are multiple languages spoken in the Ardennes as a result of tourism development and the increase in migration. This multiplicity of languages creates a dynamic between regional, national and international languages which is based mostly on their perceived values. Although all languages are perceived to be important, certain languages are more important than others due to their perceived relevance in communication and business. This is discussed by Cronin (2000) and Price (2014) who explain that instrumental languages are often prioritized in the field of tourism because these are the ones that ensure effective communication, reduce linguistic shock between tourists and locals, and thus, reduce possible economic consequences from poor communication (Cronin, 2000; Price, 2014). This is why instrumental languages are perceived as needing to be prioritized by local communities. In the case of the Ardennes, it can be seen that languages such as French, English and Dutch were perceived as more valuable than Walloon for this aspect of efficient communication, and consequently economic development. Certain languages are therefore prioritised by communities based on the type of value the language brings.

Hall (1997), and Duchêne and Heller (2012) explain that there is a renewed interest in regional languages as a result of the increasing awareness of the effects of globalization on localities by society. The authors explain that there is an increasing need to return to something more local, and valorising regional languages can help do so. Despite receiving less attention as a communicative tool due to the language shift Walloon experienced, the language was perceived as having a symbolic value. Therefore, Walloon is perceived by the community as being relevant from a heritage perspective. For those who speak Walloon, the language is also relevant from an emotional point of view. This is exemplified by the perceived symbolic value locals attach to Walloon as they perceive it as a good thing to revalorize

languages that would otherwise not be perceived as valuable anymore or that would get lost (Johnstone, 2016). However, despite this symbolic value of Walloon and the interest of the local community to valorise their heritage eventually through tourism, the instrumental value of national and international languages remains more important. This shows thus that despite the interest in regional languages as a reaction to globalization (Hall, 1997; Duchêne & Heller, 2012), it can't compete with the need to develop national and international languages also as a result of globalization (Cronin, 2000; Price, 2014). This dynamic between instrumental and symbolic languages could also be influenced by the degree of language shift. If the language shift would not have gone as far in the case of Walloon, the dynamic between languages could be different and regional languages might have stronger roles in the community as is the case in Wales (Phillips & Thomas, 2001) or Ireland (Carden, 2012). Then, incorporating the language in the tourism setting could be more successful due to the viability of the language.

As Snow (2004) shows, tourism has an important influence on language use and language choice. This choice is mainly based on a language's economic contribution which further influences the dynamic between languages. This dynamic is also reflected in the locals' attitudes towards the use of Walloon in tourism, as the community perceives it as more important to prioritize the development of national and international languages to improve tourism rather than commodifying Walloon as a resource. This is because the local community recognizes the benefits of linguistic diversity for tourism development. At the same time, due to poor language learning and a lack of motivation, they perceive relevant languages as poorly spoken which is perceived as strongly impacting tourism development negatively. These languages should thus be prioritized. Furthermore, Walloon is not perceived as being as valuable in tourism as functional languages to communicate or nature as an attraction are. Therefore, its use is not perceived as having a strong impact on tourism development. As a result, this creates a dynamic between languages in tourism and the community, positioning them on a hierarchy of importance, and affecting their quality (due to limited use), relevance and even maintenance. Such a dynamic influenced by language shift, socio-political contexts and other global influences also explains to some extent the disappearance of regional languages overall.

These discussions show that language is indeed at the heart of the tourist experience and the development of tourism as Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) stress. In the Ardennes and at other destinations, language is always mentioned to be important but the extent to which it is important is not always known or recognized by the local community. It is thus based on the overt value of a language that language choice is made. Despite the need to return to something more local and based on the extent of language shift, communities might prioritise languages that create profit rather than pride, because economic value tends to be more explicit than cultural value.

The role of language in identification processes

The local community in the Ardennes has different ways of identifying which is influenced by one's background and experiences in life as mentioned by Salazar and Graburn (2014). The regional identity is recognized to be important and strong, but not relevant for everyone as there seems to be a relation between being born in the Ardennes and an individual's character, and the Ardennese identity. Additionally, the Ardennese identity is also perceived as changing and adapting, which can also influence the way people relate to it. Culture is thus flexible and dynamic as mentioned by Cohen (1988). Therefore, it seems that locals are more likely to relate to their localities, but this does not imply that there is a local identity either. Furthermore, Walloon does not have an overt role in the local, cultural or individual identification process of non-speakers and Walloon-speakers. That even Walloon-speakers do not use Walloon in their identification process exemplifies how far language shift has gone. Additionally, as Walloon is spoken in the whole of Wallonia and not just in the Ardennes, the language is broader than the region and people might, therefore, have a different identification process with the language. These outcomes show that there is a gap between the local community's perspective and that of Francard (2013), who suggests that the language is part of cultural identity and individual identities in the Ardennes. However, it could also be noted that the language is indistinctly part of identity and that locals are simply not aware of it.

Overall, this outcome is more in line with Hoare (2000), who argues that in some cases, it is not necessary to speak the language to identify to either a regional or local identity. The author adds that the language can still be relevant and meaningful to a community due to its symbolic value and this was perceived to be the case for the Walloon language. A regional language can be perceived by locals as contributing to reinforcing a regional and local culture by its presence in the local heritage (place names, customs, etc.). For tourism, this means that using a regional language would not necessary be representative of a local or regional identity, but it can reinforce the community's bond to the local or regional culture.

Francard (2013) mentions that the emotional and heritage-related value of the Walloon language is important for the community and that by speaking the language, locals have an affection for it. This means that despite not perceiving Walloon as having a role in identification processes, the local community does relate to the language whether it is consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, and to varying extents. Also, there is a difference in the way Walloon-speakers relate to language and the way non-speaker do. For Walloon speakers, there was more than just a bond through culture and heritage, it was also emotional. They also attach meanings and connotations to the language that only they can have due to their experience with it. The affection of a speaker for a regional language can thus come from simply speaking the language. Non-speakers having little contact or experience with the language, do not have this relationship with it. For them, the bond exists through culture, traditions and family. Therefore, the language is still relevant to some extent.

However, the approach of the local community to the language's use remains passive as little efforts are done to maintain it despite the positive attitudes towards it (Hoare, 2000). This is perceived to be due to the lack of opportunity to practice the language, but affection can be an important aspect of the problem here as well.

Finally, it was expected that those who speak Walloon would be more likely to have negative attitudes towards the commodification of Walloon for tourism. This expectation is based on Francard's (2013) perceived role of Walloon in identification processes, but also on Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne (2014)'s suggestion that the commodification of language and culture can lead to tensions within a community based on issues of legitimacy and authenticity. However, there was not enough evidence showing that those who speak Walloon are more likely to have negative attitudes towards language commodification as it is not part of their identification process. As language shift has already gone so far, it seems that there is affection missing due to the limited number of speakers which could give locals stronger ideas about the use of the language in tourism. Yet, Walloon-speakers are perceived by the local community to be the ones that will benefit the most from using the language in tourism due to the remaining emotional link they have with it.

These discussions show that if a language is spoken, it does not necessarily mean it is part of a cultural or individual identity. Language shift seems to have an important influence on that aspect. Yet, even if the language is not an integral part of identity, its presence in the landscape can still be part of the local or regional culture and provides an understanding of these contexts. The role of a regional language in identification processes can thus be unconscious as a result of language shift. Additionally, that a language is perceived as important for the local or regional culture and that locals perceive it as important, does not mean that they will be more engaged with the language's revalorization. This can explain to some extent why locals have strong or less strong opinions about the commodification of their regional language.

The perceived value of Walloon in tourism

As Cordeiro (2011) explains in the case of tourism, a language needs to be reduced into manageable pieces so that people feel attracted, can identify, and can make sense of it. The locals in the Ardennes, even those who do not perceive the use of Walloon as beneficial for tourism or the region, agree and explain that for its use to be meaningful, it should be used in a subtle, superficial and touristified way. However, as discussed in the literature chapter, there is a debate going on about those who argue against and those who are supportive of the commodification of culture for tourism. This research contributes to this debate by showing that in certain cases, the local community perceives it as necessary to commodify a cultural resource to revalorize it as the language shift is already too advanced.

Arguments against cultural commodification for tourism used by scholars such as MacCannell (1976) and Greenwood (1977) are that the consumption of culture contributes

to the creation of a staged culture and renders the cultural resource meaningless to its community. In the case of Walloon in the Ardennes, the language would indeed have to be reintroduced in the culture despite not being perceived as an integral part of it currently, which could impact its perceived authenticity. However, it is perceived by the locals as rendering the language more meaningful. Locals expect this commodification process of the Walloon language to only become meaningless if it becomes overexploited in tourism. Furthermore, contrary to Johnstone (2012)'s argument saying that the commodification of culture erodes the language and the culture, it is perceived by the local community in the Ardennes that the commodification of Walloon in tourism would rather maintain what is on its way to being lost from a symbolic point of view. This refers to the maintenance of heritage-related resources in which the use of the language is still relevant, as well as traditions and expressions. However, linguistic commodification is not perceived by the locals as contributing to the revitalization of the language, nor its maintenance as an instrumental language. This is because they only perceive the language to be meaningful if used in a superficial way. As Barrera (1998) mentions, when used in tourism, the language can only be experienced superficially and will only have superficial impacts which reduces the chances of revitalizing the language. Yet, locals do not expect tourists nor other locals to actually learn the language and don't expect the language to come back. This makes language commodification be perceived as acceptable and even necessary to be meaningful in tourism.

Scholars who are supportive of cultural commodification are often less traditionalist. Cordeiro (2011) talks about this commodification process to be beneficial for tourists, but the outcome of this study shows that the commodification of language is also necessary for the local community to be able to relate to it. As the language shift is already so advanced, the community perceives the language to be only meaningful for the community by being commodified and accompanied by at least a French translation. What differentiates commodification for tourists and commodification for locals would be that for tourists the language takes on an economic value as discussed by Leeman and Modan (2010), whereas for locals, the language mostly takes on a symbolic value. In the Ardennes, the locals associate other positive impacts to the commodification of Walloon. Although it is not always clear to the community why the language should be used in tourism, they still perceive it as an opportunity to reconnect with the language, heritage, and the regional and local culture as is discussed in Greathouse-Amador's (2005) study. Using the regional language in tourism can stimulate feelings of pride, respect, nostalgia and the memories of Walloon speakers. For non-speakers, this could improve or create a connection to their heritage and to some extent, stir up memories. Furthermore, similarly to Greathouse-Amador's (2005) study, the commodification of Walloon could have multiple positive impacts such as increased awareness for the language's endangerment, the revalorization of the language in the everyday setting and an overall revived interest in the language. These outcomes are thus more supportive of Cohen's (1988) argument which suggests that commodification can also result in positive impacts due to a culture's flexibility and dynamic.

Based on Hall-Lew and Lew's (2014) discussion, the local community in the Ardennes also perceives the use of Walloon to be most beneficial as heritage resource rather than as communicative tool. Although the language's role in the political economy was not perceived to be necessarily relevant by the local community, they see the language to have a role in marketing to some extent (as it should remain superficial), but mostly in place-making. Therefore, based on Hall-Lew and Lew's (2014) framework, Walloon is perceived as relevant from a historical perspective which refers to the museumization and preservation of the language and its role in the local culture. This means that the language is used because it carries meanings of nostalgia and quaintness to tourists but mostly to locals. It could also be used as a way to market certain products or businesses, but not as a way to market the Ardennes, towns or villages. Furthermore, it is not perceived as useful to provide a contemporary sense of place because it is not part of the everyday context and is not present enough in the community's linguistic experience. For the local community having the language part of the historical context is perceived as enough and using it to convey a local or regional identity or as linguistic skill would only create conflicts with the local community's needs and values, as well as the perceived authenticity.

Hall-Lew and Lew's (2014) framework is, therefore, not applicable to the case of Walloon as developing the language to have more prominent roles than just a historical-related role is perceived by locals as rendering it too commercial. If it becomes too commercial, it can result in tensions and conflicts within the local community. This is further in line with Carden's (2012) study on the perceived abundance use of Irish in tourism places which results in irritations within the local community due to being perceived as profit-driven rather than coming from pride. This is also the case in the Ardennes as it is perceived by the local community that the use of Walloon in tourism should remain subtle and not overexploited. If the language was to be over-exploited, it would not be perceived as targeting the local community anymore, but simply to be sold to tourists.

Interestingly, this is also what was suggested by the tourism expert who perceives potential in the use of the language in tourism but also wants to match the needs of the local community. However, his ideas seem to be more developed and touristified than the ideas of the local community. This can be because the tourism expert knows what is required to make it attractive to tourists. Yet, this gap between the perspective of the local community and the tourism industry is what can create conflicts in the long or even short term. Therefore, as Whitney-Squire & al., (2018) suggest, it is important to create a common ground to discuss the development of Walloon which does not only focus on creating an economic product but a meaningful and creative cultural commodity. This implies including the local community in the commodification process of the language. As Muselaers (2017) and Timothy (2011) explain, this would better match the community's needs, values and image, and contributes to the development of a more successful commodification of Walloon. This would not only stimulate the valorisation of Walloon by the local community but make a tourism product more representative of the local community. Despite the outcome of language use in tourism

being for folklorism rather than revivalism, it is pride rather than profit that is perceived to motivate the use of Walloon in tourism. This could lessen the eventual negative impacts on the language stemming from the commodification process as discussed by Barrera (1998), and Duchêne and Heller (2012).

Finally, Hall-Lew and Lew (2014) also discuss what the effects will be on tourists when commodifying the language in tourism. Yet, the local community in the Ardennes is more sceptical about these impacts as they perceive them to be minimal. Using Walloon in tourism is perceived to be able to contribute to some extent to the tourist's experience if certain conditions are met, but it would not contribute to tourism development. When using the language in a historical context as discussed by Hall-Lew and Lew (2014), locals perceive tourists to have a feeling of uniqueness, originality, but not an authentic or legitimate experience. In line with Richards' (2007) argument, the locals perceive thus the Ardennes as able to position itself as unique but not necessarily as authentic due to the state of language shift. They perceive the language shift to be too advanced for tourists to be able to relate and create a connection to the language, but it is also not perceived as representative of the community. Here, locals do not perceive the language to become part of the regional identity anymore as is suggested by Cohen (1988). This means that tourists interested in the language would most likely speak Walloon and/or French or be aware of the linguistic situation of Wallonia. Thus, contrary to authors like Barrera (1998) who suggest cultural distance is important for the tourist experience, locals do not perceive this distance as being beneficial, but actually as limiting the experience. As a result, the local community does not perceive the use of Walloon in tourism as capable of attracting more tourists and is thus sceptical regarding the economic benefits of language commodification. This can have an important impact on the engagement of the local community in commodifying the language which is not expected to be high in the Walloon case.

Furthermore, it was expected that those involved in tourism would more likely be supportive of the commodification of Walloon in tourism based on the research done by Mansfeld and Ginosar (2014) as they would be the ones benefiting the most. Unfortunately, this could not be confirmed or rejected by this study as the sample size was too limited. However, due to the perceived limited economic impacts of the use of Walloon in tourism, those involved in tourism will most likely not benefit from this more than those who are not involved in tourism.

Overall, this means that the degree of language shift of a language is here again an important factor that influences the way a local community perceives the commodification of it in tourism. If language shift is already far, the commodification of a regional language can be perceived as a solution to preserve it and to permit the community to reconnect with it. Yet, it is not perceived as likely to be revitalized. Its commodification is than for folklorism rather than revivalism, but it does not necessarily mean it is being folklorised for profit. However, when the tourism industry gets involved, folklorization for profit can start becoming more important than pride, and this is where tensions between the tourism industry and a

local community can arise. Yet, despite the positive attitudes of a community towards the language or its commodification, engagement has still an important influence on whether a regional language's use in tourism will be successful or not.

Limitations

This section addresses the limitations encountered during the research. Certain limitations were already mentioned in the methodology section and measures were taken to tackle these. The most important concerns related to the representativeness and generalizability of the research which was dealt with through using semi-structured interviews and using a diverse sample. Yet, other limitations came up during this research which were unforeseen. The main limitations relate to the additional observational data, the sample and the interview questions.

Observation of an event on the use of regional minority languages yielded data that was analysed as well, but the data did not end up contributing anything to the overall research (appendix – observational data). This is because the focus was mostly on other regional languages and the event was mainly attended by people from the region in which the event took place. Residents of the Ardennes were thus underrepresented. Besides, visitors did not mention their point of view regarding the use of the language in tourism as the content of the lectures did not focus on tourism as one of the possible environments in which the language could be maintained or revitalized. Even during the lecture explaining the project '*My municipality says 'Yes' to regional languages*' which was supposed to discuss this specific matter, tourism was only mentioned and not further discussed. Therefore, it was decided not to use the data collected through these observations in this research. As attending this event was only done to find an additional source of information, this data could be omitted without lowering the quality of the overall data.

The sample was interesting as it was varied, including people with different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, etc. This has made possible the collection of in-depth and rich data regarding certain topics while taking into consideration their backgrounds. The size of the sample was beneficial in the sense that it permitted a focus on the in-depth data while also ensuring data saturation. Unfortunately, it was too small and could not provide a clear answer to who is most likely interested in the use of Walloon in tourism, those working in tourism or not, or those speaking Walloon or not. Additionally, this made it difficult to pinpoint what exactly differentiated the answers from each of these groups. To deal with this issue in further research, increasing the sample size could be a solution. Generalizability could also be improved by using questionnaires as a research method. It would allow for a better generalization of the outcomes to the wider population.

There were also limitations in terms of validity relating to the use of semi-structured interviews as the main way of collecting data. The interviews were very insightful especially because interviewees were able to discuss in-depth certain topics. This has provided valuable

data regarding the Walloon language and its perceived value, as well as the development of tourism and the perceived value of the language in it. However, certain interviewees had their preferences for each topic and provided very valuable information on certain topics but less on other ones. As a result, there was not always an answer to certain important questions, which made comparing answers between interviewees difficult, but also understanding the context in which certain answers were given or not. The language of the interview could also be noted as a limitation. The interviews were done in French and were translated into English so that the data could be used for the analysis. This process also requires some degree of interpretation which can also result in misinterpretations as what was said in one language could have a different meaning in the other one (Adler & Clark, 2007). To deal with these limitations in further research, a test interview could be done which permits the interviewer to be better prepared for the actual interviews by testing the clarity and the relevance of questions, as well as the use of language and pauses (McGrath & al., 2019).

Further research

Contrary to most tourism research, this research focusses on the local community as the main stakeholder and aims at having a deeper understanding of how they perceive the use of their language as a commodity in tourism. However, as this research is limited in scope, further research would be beneficial.

First of all, to make the research generalizable to the wider population, it would be necessary to use a larger sample and have a sample of interviewees that represents the entire region. By increasing the sample size, the significance level of the outcomes can be increased, better defining the results. This means that it would be possible to see whether being involved or not in tourism or speaking the language or not does have an influence on the attitude of locals. This research could also be replicated to other destinations that want to better understand how the local community perceives the use of their regional language or how to develop it sustainably in the tourism setting. This is true in the sense that a similar research question could be used with adapted sub-questions and interview questions as case studies are place and time-specific.

While this research has taken into consideration the local community and its perspective, it has not taken into consideration the stage of tourism development which can also have an impact on the perspective of the local community. The way and the extent to which tourism develops at a destination can change the attitudes of locals towards tourism, eventually also creating tensions between stakeholders and reducing support for certain tourism-related projects (Doxey, 1975). Taking the stage of tourism development into consideration in this research would contribute to a better understanding of how it influences the attitudes of locals towards such use of cultural resources. Furthermore, although tourism in the Ardennes is well developed, the Walloon language is not one of the main cultural

resource used in the region. It would, therefore, be interesting to do similar research at a destination in which language is already an integral part of the tourism offer.

Finally, this research aimed at understanding the attitudes of locals in the Belgian Ardennes, but it did not take into consideration the way the local community understands or defines certain concepts such as 'local culture', 'pride', 'community', etc. Such concepts can have different meanings in different cultures. For example, the tourism representative explained that some cultures use their cultural resources in tourism because of their pride, while other cultures decide not to use these also because of pride. This is an interesting aspect to take into consideration for further research as it would permit better understanding the attitudes of the local community towards commodification.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of research in the fields of tourism and sociolinguistics on the attitudes of the local community regarding the commodification of regional languages for tourism purposes, this research aimed at filling this gap. This case study aimed at understanding how the locals in the Belgian Ardennes perceive the commodification of the Walloon language. To do so, thirteen in-depth interviews were done with fifteen interviewees with different backgrounds, experiences, and expertise.

What can be concluded from this research is that the local community in the Belgian Ardennes would find the use of Walloon in the tourism setting interesting. The Walloon language being an important aspect of local cultural heritage, it deserves to be better valorised. Although tourism has developed quite well over the decades, certain cultural resources are perceived to deserve more attention and regional languages are perceived as one of them. However, there are certain conditions mentioned by the local community to meaningfully use the language in tourism to fit the local values. These conditions seem to be a result of the influence of language shift, the cultural concept of pride and the need for tourism development. This means that the language should not be overexploited, should not be used as a form of communication and should be commodified in such a way that it appeals to tourists and locals. Therefore, the process of language commodification is not perceived as problematic, on the contrary, it is perceived as necessary to be valuable in tourism. However, it should not hinder the functioning of the everyday life of locals and tourists. If the language is taking too much space in society, the everyday setting will become uncomfortable for both locals and tourists as most do not speak or understand the language.

Therefore, it is perceived as most valuable by the locals when the language is used in superficial, subtle and creative ways such as through place naming, product or business branding, and in cultural and heritage-related places or attractions. This is not perceived as being able to bring back the language, but it would revalorize a specific aspect of regional and local culture which might otherwise get lost as the language disappears. However, there seems to be a gap between what the tourism industry sees as possible which is more developed and touristified, and what the local community sees as simple and subtle. Although the tourism industry is best informed about the needs of tourists and how to make the destination attractive, the local community's support is needed for such a project to be successful. To reduce this gap, the local community could be included in the decision-making process, but also involved in the development process of language integration in tourism. Not only will the local community be more supportive of such a project, but it will also be more sustainable as it will be more representative and in-line with its values and needs.

Those who are perceived to benefit the most from the use of Walloon in the Ardennese tourism setting are the locals. This is because they have a closer bond to the language than tourists do. Despite the language not being one of the main attraction points

of the region, its use is perceived by locals as capable to bring uniqueness and originality to the destination which could be valued by tourists. It is also perceived by those who do not speak Walloon, that Walloon-speakers and older generations will benefit the most from developing the language in tourism. This is because it can stir up feelings of conviviality, belongingness and nostalgia which result from their affection to the language. Those who do not speak the language are perceived as more distant from the language and less impacted by whether the language is used in tourism or not. Nonetheless, it could create a renewed interest in the language, giving those who don't speak the language the opportunity to get closer to their heritage. Yet, whether one is more likely to be supportive of the use of Walloon in tourism if he or she speaks Walloon cannot be confirmed by this research. This is also true for whether one is involved in tourism or not.

Furthermore, the local community perceives it as more important to develop other languages that are more valuable for tourism and contributing to the economic development of the region. These languages are international and national languages and are valued for their capacity to create profit, especially through their communicative value. This is not perceived to be the case for the Walloon language as it can only be used as a cultural resource. Additionally, as they perceive Walloon to only receive limited interest from tourists and even from locals, it is not always clear to the local community why and how using regional languages in tourism can be valuable. This is also why a part of the local community might not be supportive of the use of Walloon in tourism. Despite this, locals recognize the language's symbolic value and how using it in certain instances can strengthen this value. Yet, it does not seem likely that Walloon will become an important part of the Ardennese tourism offer.

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Appendix

Interview questions

As explained in the 'interviews' section from the methodology chapter, the interviews were semi-structured. This means that certain questions were prepared beforehand to ensure that important topics were covered and that other questions came up during the interviews. Therefore, the following list of interview questions only includes the questions prepared beforehand. The interviews were divided into three parts based on the sub-questions of this thesis.

Interview questions – English version

- How old are you?
- For how long have you been living in the region?

Walloon and identity in the Ardennes

- How would you characterize the region?
    - Do you feel like you represent these characteristics as well?
- How would you characterize the people of the region?
    - Do they differ from people from other regions and how?
- What do you associate with the regional identity?
- What do you associate with the local identity?
- What do you know about Walloon? How do you relate to it?
    - Is it part of how you identify?
    - Is it part of the regional identity?
- How is the language relevant?
- How would you say that Walloon and French relate to each other?
- What do you know about the status of Walloon at the moment?
    - Do you think it is necessary to revitalize it?
    - Do you think revitalization efforts would help bring the language back?

Linguistic diversity in the Ardennes

- How would you describe the linguistic diversity in the Ardennes?
    - Is language diversity important?
- Which languages are important for this region?
    - What do you associate with these languages?
    - What role would you give these languages in the region?

- Are all languages equally important?
- Would you say there is a dynamic between all these languages? Could you elaborate on this?
- Would you give language a role in tourism in the Ardennes?
    - Do some languages have a different function in tourism?

Walloon in tourism

- Do you think that using Walloon in tourism would be interesting?
    - Why?
    - How is it currently used?
    - How could it be used and how not?
- How would it contribute to tourism?
- Would it be representative of the local and regional culture?
- Would it be representative of the local community?
- Do you think using Walloon in tourism can have a serious impact on the community?
- How do you think tourists perceive Walloon?
    - Do you think it could attract more visitors?
    - Do you think it could help raise awareness of its extinction?
- Should there be policies in order to regulate the use of Walloon in tourism?
    - And in general?

Observational data

As discussed in the 'limitations' section of the discussion chapter, the observational data was not used in the data analysis. It was not relevant enough to contribute to the outcome of this research. However, by adding the data in the appendix, it is possible to understand why this choice was made.

Information about the event

- Monday 18th May 2019
- Arrived at 10.25 and left at 16.00
- At Musee de la Vie Wallonne, Liege
  Rue des Minneurs, 4000 Liege

Arrival at the festival

Due to travel limitations, the aim was to arrive at 10.25 in the building in order to be there before the first conference started. However, activities had already started before that, as well as the conference. Once we entered the building, I looked at the books laying on the first stand near the entrance. The person taking care of that booth quickly arrived and greeted us in Walloon. He continued talking Walloon with someone else. To get to the conference, we had to pass the entrance of the museum and went up the stairs to the last floor. Although some parts of the museum were clearly renewed with a more modern look, some parts were still old such as wooden stairs and stone walls. Once arriving at the conference, the conference seemed to have started earlier. Several cameras and journalists were standing in the back of the room. Speakers were sitting in the front of the room, three at a long table and one at a speaker desk. The public was sitting in the middle of the room. Many of them had cameras and phones with them. Some also had notebooks and were writing in them. There was no real furniture in the room, except for chairs and three tables, and several old wardrobes with a date and location next to them.

Conference: Table ronde sur les “bonnes pratiques” en langue regionals (10.30 – 12.00)

The first speaker was a representative of the Italian dialects. Unfortunately, his time was almost over when we arrived, and it was difficult to understand what he was saying due to the microphone he was using.

The second speaker started his lecture soon after. He was talking about the Basque langue spoken in France. He was arguing that the Basque language was an interesting case because, contrary to other languages and dialects in Europe, the Basque langue does not have a known origin or a known language base. This language is a minority language in France and is also considered as heritage, but not as an official minority language. Although the language was estimated to disappear near the end of the 19th century, the language is still spoken today. He explains that although this is surprising, there are still efforts needed to maintain the language alive. A revitalization effort was to use the language in education. Although he did not mention a date, this has helped to stabilize the vitality of the language. Children are first educated in the Basque language in primary school until they are 11 years old. In secondary school, students are educated in French. In higher education, the use of the language drops considerably because it is not perceived as similarly valuable on the global market as French. Education therefore permits to some extent for language to be transmitted, but bilingualism remains for practical reasons. Furthermore, the speaker explains that those who have learned the language are not as proficient as native speakers. Even then, he encourages those who are learning and those who are natives to keep practising for language maintenance. The speaker then goes on by commenting that school is not everything. Although school has potential to revitalize a language, this should be complemented by home and community efforts, but also on a political level which is not

enough the case yet. By doing so, he perceives the language to be able to have a bigger reach, which will also help the Basque language to become a functional and work language. Finally, he points out the recent trend of language use on social media and how this can impact the future of the Basque language. This speaker was very emotional by the way he was speaking. At some point, he was rather loud which made it complicated to understand him.

The third speaker was a representative of the Picard language in France. This language is also spoken in Belgium, and this is one of the only common points between the two regions he says. As he explains, there is a difficulty for both regions to collaborate in order to create a network for language promotion and valorisation. During the Q&A session, a person explains that this lack of collaboration is because of the language diversity in the Walloon part of Belgium and the lack of possible funding for all these languages compared to the French region. In both regions, politics seem to have an important role in the devitalization of the language. In France, the government says that the language should be promoted but they do not actually act. They do also not recognize the language as an official minority language which has implications on the subsidiaries level. The speaker explains that the promotion of Picard seems to work through entertainment. They especially focus on the aspect of quality in entertainment, such as literature, theatre, music, etc., but does not work on the streets or in families. Additionally, this does seem to mostly reach an older public and not the young ones. Unfortunately, he did not explain more on this topic, so I am not sure what he means by this. A more recent trend, is the use of Picard in education, with a focus on the cultural aspect of the language, general knowledge and practice of the language. The interest especially grows at universities. Despite these efforts, there is still a lack of volunteering and campaigning. Therefore, the speaker does not necessarily see a future for the language.

The fourth and last speaker is a representative of the Flemish language. Contrary to the other languages discussed before, the Flemish language seems to still have an important vitality. On the political level, there seems to be a lack of attention given to the discussion on languages. There is however a differentiation between the different ways of speaking in Flanders. There is Dutch, which is the official language, which should be spoken in official settings. However, most often, it is the ‘tussentaal’ that is used by people in everyday settings. This is a form of language which stands in between the Flemish dialect and the Dutch language. Finally, there is the Flemish dialect, with its multiple forms varying throughout the Flemish region. The two last forms of language are used in informal settings. Flemish universities put a lot of effort into doing research on Flemish forms of language, as well as accepts and the variety of dialects. The speaker, however, notes that it is not clear what further actions will be and what the outcomes could be in the future. For now, the linguistic diversity is protected in certain schools.

The Q&A session following the conference was rather chaotic and it was difficult to understand what was being said. Some of the information collected during the Q&A session

was also included in the conference part when this made sense. The following theme was not necessarily discussed during the conference itself, but was however an important topic during the Q&A session. A person from the public asked whether we will have a general language in the future. The discussion between the public and the speakers following this question focussed on the English language, which they expect would be the general language of the future. Using English was even qualified as an obligation for some. However, because English seems to be gaining more and more reach, an argument against its monopolization was that people would be using their minority languages in order to oppose English. Furthermore, standardizing minority languages would be necessary in case they would become standard and vehicular languages at some point.

The Ardennese region was mostly not mentioned during these conferences and tourism either.

Conference: Ma Commune dit oui aux Langues regionals (12.00 – 12.30)

Immediately after the first conference started the second short conference focussing on how municipalities can implement regional languages in their daily lives. This was led by a young woman, who first briefly reacted to the previous conference. She explained how the objective is to take action on a local scale for each of the regional languages. To do so, they developed a project in March 2018 which was a convention between municipalities (local governments) and the community living in these municipalities. The aim is to create a network between municipalities and a concrete action plan in order to actively include regional languages in these municipalities. By signing this label, not only do municipalities engage to promote regional languages and to help protect them, but they can also receive help and resources in order to develop. There are in total 36 actions that can be taken divided into 4 categories: communication, culture, education, and signage, tourism and socio-economic. In order to receive this label, municipalities need to implement at least 15 of these actions. By doing so, they hope that these languages will again have a space in everyday life. At the moment, only two Ardennese municipalities have signed the convention, Durbuy and Attert. Tourism was also part of the 4 categories, but received less attention than the other categories. It was only mentioned. This can be because tourism is an area of life that targets other individuals than those from the local community and that is sometimes perceived as less serious. Due to timing issues, this conference was wrapped up in a rush and the public, as well as the press and the speakers quickly left the room.

Break

I had time during the break to actually look around me, but everyone seemed to be in a rush due to the other activities that were still taking place. There were about 7 booths with information, booklets, books, flyers, pins, pens, etc. While some people behind their

booths spoke mainly in Walloon, some also did mainly speak in French. This might be depending on whom they were talking to because not everyone spoke Walloon. The majority of these flyers were targeting the Liège region and its culture. There was music in the middle of the court, but it wasn't clear whether this was Walloon, Picard, Gaumais or Champenois. Those who presented the singer did speak a mix between French and Walloon (or another regional language). The public seemed to be around 40 and older. There were some younger people, who also attended the conference, but they were a minority. Furthermore, not everyone who attended the festival also attended the conferences.

Conference: Langue regional, cement social

The third and last conference focussed on presenting to a wider public the type of projects that are taking place, which favour the use of Walloon and other regional languages in their projects. This was presented by two young teachers with an expertise in Walloon. While some projects focussed on using regional languages in schools, others related to theatre performances or audio/visual experiments. Again, the majority of these activities targeted the Liège region or regions in which other regional languages were spoken. The Ardennese region was thus under-represented.