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My mother tongue is Hungarian. It is spoken in Hungary and it is a minority language in the surrounding countries, especially Romania. It is not part of the same language family as European languages like English, French, German or Russian. It is a Uralic language, distantly related to Finnish and Estonian. Because Hungarian is not a widely spoken language, if you want to get on, you have to speak a foreign language. Unsurprisingly, the most popular second language among Hungarians is English, the global language. Like most of my friends, I am multilingual – as well as Hungarian, I am fluent in English and German. I can also get by in Italian and I did an evening course in Spanish a few years back, but I'm a bit rusty now. I seem to pick up languages quite easily, helped, I'm sure, by the fact that language teaching in Hungary is so good – it has to be, given that no-one speaks our language but us!

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What's your mother tongue?

What other languages do you speak?

What do you think is the best way to keep in touch with friends?

Do people keep in touch differently now compared to fifty years ago?

Sample answers:

Examiner: What's your mother tongue?

Candidate: My mother tongue is Portuguese. It's predominantly spoken in Brazil but also in other parts of the world, such as Portugal and Africa.

Examiner: What other languages do you speak?

Candidate: Although I grew up in Brazil, I can also speak Italian because my mother and one set of grandparents are Italian and I grew up hearing the language all around me. I'm really proud to be bilingual and I'd like my children to be bilingual too.

Examiner: What do you think is the best way to keep in touch with friends?

Candidate: It depends how far you are from your friends. If you are geographically close, you should meet up face-to-face. Long-distance communication can cause misunderstandings and resentments to build up – when you write, you only have the words on the page, not body language or tone of voice.

Examiner: Do people keep in touch differently now compared to fifty years ago?

Candidate: Well, of course, people use the Internet now and mobile phones. I'm quite young but even when I was a teenager nobody in my friendship circle had a mobile. Now it's seen as indispensable and you would feel left out if you didn't have one. But as I said before, I think it's better to meet up with friends than to communicate using technology. There's much to be said for communicating in so-called old-fashioned ways.

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Candidate: A language I would like to learn is Spanish. It's used not only in Spain but also in many other countries, and I believe it's one of the most widely-spoken languages in the world. So it's a language that is definitely worth knowing. It would be useful to me for business purposes. Also, Spanish culture is becoming more and more influential internationally. It is, for example, overtaking English as the most widely-spoken language in certain parts of the USA. It is influencing music and art. So, all in all, I think it's a handy language to know.

I doubt it would be too challenging for me to learn Spanish because it is a Latin language, just like my mother tongue, French. I think Spanish vocabulary would be easier for me to acquire than Spanish grammar. I understand the grammar is one of the most difficult things about the Spanish language.