

“Who am I?”
Indigenous identity in arctic urban communities.
Sociolinguistic interviews in Dudinka¹

Keywords: indigenous language, indigenous identity, language maintenance, language attitude

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The language can be regarded as “one of the most important ethnic symbols” of the indigenous people of Taimyr today. The question of how central the language actually is in defining a modern community mostly residing in urbanized contexts with respect to other elements of the ethnic identity led me to study the multilingual community of contemporary Dudinka in the indigenous north territory of Russia.

The discussion in this article is based on semi-structured interviews conducted in the municipality of Dudinka during 2015-2019 with 19 participants born between 1950s and 2000s who identify themselves and whom the local community also identify as aboriginal people.

Semi-structured interviews constitute the source of data in this article. The interview topics and questions have been designed based on the questionnaire used in Duray Zsuzsa's longitudinal study on minority language use and language attitudes in the Sámi community in Enontekiö (Duray 2015), and also based on Dudinka communities' research in 2008/2010, where the sampling was purely experimental, which is not representative (5 interviews and 22 questionnaire surveys). The interviews in this particular study have been structured to map (1) the domains and patterns of personal language use, (2) language attitudes, (3) the presence of the communities involved in the maintenance of the heritage language and culture in the target city and the participation of the interviewees in their activities, (4) the ways personal ethnic identities are constructed. The block of questions under (4) on identity construction is in the focus of this investigation containing closed and open-ended questions on the role of the language and other elements of the indigenous culture in the construction of today's ethnic identity. The interview ends with an ‘identity game’ requesting the participants to arrange constituents of the indigenous culture in order of importance with regard to their own ethnic identity.

¹ The present study is part of the project “Minority languages in the process of urbanization: A comparative study of urban multilingualism in Arctic indigenous communities” (NKFIH-11246) carried out at the Department of Historical Linguistics and Uralistics, at the Research institute for Linguistics in 2015-2020.

A series of interviews followed recruiting participants through the snowball technique. It is important to note that the size of the sample is relatively small, thus it does not allow for generalisations. Participatory observation was conducted during the interviews..... at.....

In the analysis participants' personal past and present experiences of the language use are explored, and an emphasis is placed on revealing individual language attitudes towards the language with the aim of answering the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent minority language is an essential part of ethnic identity?
- (2) What are the markers of ethnic minority that are left to the minority people after their traditional way of life and subsistence has been lost?
- (3) What kind of minority language attitudes characterize urban minority members?
- (4) How are attitudes reflected in the patterns of language use?
- (5) How do they manifest themselves in behaviour in various minority language domains?

Throughout the article generalizations are avoided and the focus is purposefully on individual experiences and perceptions in order to gain a better insight into what the maintenance of the heritage language means when constructing individual ethnic identity in the local community of Dudinka today.²

Data analysis

Personal interviews were roughly transcribed and excerpts are presented here throughout the analysis to highlight participants' contribution to understanding each notion of the analysis. Thus, I examined the 'identity game' first and was curious to understand what each aspect of the ethnic identity, both linguistic and cultural, meant for each participant. Although I do not consider a quantitative analysis of the 'identity game' plausible, I still indicate the order of importance in numbers to note the position of the language with respect to the non-linguistic elements as perceived by the participants. Similarly, I do not wish to generalize about the norms of language use or language attitudes, but rather I take into consideration the personal linguistic profiles and language attitudes as they relate to the way each participant construct his or her own aspect in the 'identity game', as well as aim to cross-examine data for all participants to grasp the similarities and differences among the variables of language use, language attitudes and identity construction.

An important note to take here concerns the enquiry about language attitudes, as well as about the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of identity. Both of them are inevitably influenced by the presence of a linguist resulting in participants possibly shedding a more positive light on language attitudes towards the language and attributing a more prominent role to the language in their identity construction than they would normally do. Despite the fact that previous literature also accounts for language attitudes, as mental constructs, being difficult to assess and that participants might give socially desirable answers in interview situations, interviews are still considered to be applicable means of enquiring about attitudes (Garrett 2007).

² The present study is part of the project "Minority languages in the process of urbanization: A comparative study of urban multilingualism in Arctic indigenous communities" (NKFIH-11246) carried out at the Department of Finno-Ugric and Historical Linguistics, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2015-2020.

Participants

During 2015/2019 I conducted interviews with the participation of X aboriginal people residing in the municipality of Taimyr, in the city of Dudinka. Pilot interviews were conducted during 2015 with two interviewees. I have to mention one key contact person, who have helped me recruit participants for the interviews in 2019. Who played an important role in better understanding the circumstances. She is a researcher on local indigenous minorities who is also a member of a non-indigenous minority in Dudinka.

The interviews took place at the work places and homes of the interviewees, whom I had contacted either by e-mail or by telephone upon arrival in Dudinka.

As regards the data on participants, the variables of (1) ethnic identification, (2) self-assessed language proficiency, (3) the language of upbringing, (4) ancestry, and (5) type of occupation, usually it is related to the traditional culture or not; are the most significant variables to consider in this analysis in order to understand how participants relate to the importance of the language and/or other elements of the culture when defining their ethnic identity today. The association of these variables with the construction of identity is considered in the discussion of this article.

19 people who took part in the interviews: 6 (3 men and 3 women) were born after 1990s; 8 (3 men and 5 women) were born near 1970s and 1980s; and 4 women are the member of the elder generation, they were born in the 1950s- 1960s. Most of them resided in the municipality of Dudinka most of their adult lives.

Regarding their ancestry, all of the participants have indigenous parents, and all grandparents as well.

In terms of language proficiency data is based on self-assessment of the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Most of the participants consider themselves and fluent or good speakers of his/her heritage language. Fluent speakers also have fluent listening skills, but they often lack reading and writing skills. The respondents from the elderly generation, have very good language skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing also.

Young respondents are mostly students, two of them work as artists at the Folklore Center. Men are engaged in traditional occupations, they are all craftsman, carvers, while the majority of women work in education and folk art in the urban areas of the Taimyr. Respondents were all born in villages or on the Tundra in the rural areas of the Taimyr Peninsula. In terms of participant mobility, usually they have not left the arctic area, its rural areas, while during their education they had some urban experience when studying in secondary and / or higher institutions, eg. in Norilsk, Krasnoyarsk or Saint Petersburg. Ten of the participants are married, most of them to aboriginal spouses, while nine are single. Those respondents who are married all have children. Basic information on the participants is summarized in Table 1 below³.

³ Before the interviews I informed the participants that the research is anonymous and assured them that when writing about their lives, perceptions or attitudes I will present them in the way and in the sense that they had been reported to me.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Name	L	D	M	S	I	M	VJ	ACH	VB
Ethn	N	N	D	E	D	N	N	NG	EV
Date of birt	90s	90s	90s	90s	90s	90s	80s	80s	70s
Gender	F	M	F	M	M	F	M	M	M
Married	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
Place of residence	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka
Occupation	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Craftsman	Craftsman/ Performer	Craftsman
Place of upbringing	Karaul/ Dudinka	Nosok /Dudinka	Hatanga/ Dudinka/ Krasniyarsk	Ust Port/ Dudinka	Ust Avam/ Dudinka	Nosok/ Tundra/ Dudinka	Jamal, Munguj Tukhard/ Dudinka	Tundra/ Volochna/ Norilsk	Evenkia, Amur
Language proficiency	-(L)	(S)LRW	SL(RW)	-	-	SL(RW)	SLR(W)	SLR(W)	SL(RW)
Ancestry	M: N/E F: N/R GP: N/E/R	M: F: GP:	M: D F: D GP: D?	M: E F: ? GP: N/E	M: D F: D GP: D?	M: N F: N GP: N	M: N F: N GP: N?	M: Ng F: Ng GP: Ng	M: F: GP:
Language of upbringing	Russian	Nenets/ Russian	Dolgan/ Russian		Russian	Nenets/ Russian	Nenets/ Russian	Nganasan/ Russian	Russian/ Evenki

	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	16.	17.	18.	19.
Name	LE	E	S	ZH	SK	SS	VM	TB	ZB
Ethn	N	D	D	D	NG	NG	NG	EV	E
Date of birt	70s	70s	70s	70s	70s	50s	50s	50s	50s
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Married	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Place of residence	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka	Dudinka
Occupation	Folk artist	Folk artist	Folk artist	Folk artist	Folk artist/ Story- teller/ Performer	Folk artist/ Story-teller/ Performer/ Teacher	Teacher	Folk artist/ Story- teller/ Performer	Folk artist/ Story- teller/ Perform er
Place of upbringing	Nosok/ Gyda/ Norilsk	Ust Avam/ Dudinka/ Norilsk	Hantaisko e Ozero/ Norilsk	Levinski e Peski/ Dudinka / Norilsk	Volochna a/ Norilsk	Avam Tundra/ Volochna/ Dudinka		Hantaisko e ozero/ Norilsk	Tundra/ Potapov o/ Igarka
Language proficiency	SLR(W)	-(L)	-(L)	-(L)	SLRW	SLRW	SLRW	SLRW	SLRW
Ancestry	M: N F: N GP: N	M: D F: D GP: D?	M: jakut/D F: Saha/R GP: J/D/S/R	M: N F: Saha > D GP: N/D	M: Ng F: Ng GP: Ng/	M: Ng F: Ng/D GP: Ng/D	M: Ng F: GP:	M: Ev F: Ev GP: Ev/E	M: E F: E GP: E/N
Language of upbringing	Nenets Russian	Russian	Russian?	Dolgan/ Russian	Nganasan/ Russian	Nganasan/Dolga n/ Russian	Nganasan Russian	Eveniki/ Russian	Enets/ Russian

Table 1. Participant data summary

Language proficiency in heritage language and its interrelationship with the ancestry, language of upbringing

Each participant claims to be proud of being a member of the aboriginal peoples of the Taimyr. At the beginning of the interview each participant was asked to talk about his or her childhood, most specifically about norms of language use in the family and in the school domain. The aim here, on the one hand, was to see how significant the linguistic aspect of ethnic identity used to be in the early years of participants' lives versus today, especially in informal domains of language use. On the other hand, I was also interested to map out the participants', their parents' and/or their grandparents' attitudes to transferring their language to the young generations.

During the interview participants were also asked to assess their language proficiency in heritage language. While thirteen of them believe to be able to speak fluent, six of them cannot speak it at all. They were all brought up exclusively in Taimyr, except one man who had spent his childhood in the Evenki area. All of the interviewee brought up in indigenous family and none of them have Russian parents. All of them are today advocates of their indigenous language and culture.

In case of all participants I have interviewed, language proficiency seems to be affected not only by the language of upbringing and by ancestry but also equally significantly by language education or by the lack of it. And also an important factor, what efforts they make in their individual adult life to revitalize their own language and the language of the community.

The traditional fishing hunter lifestyle, and the traditional living space contributing to the maintenance of the heritage language. Many interviewees said that urban conditions are not conducive to the preservation of the language. The education in primary has played a significant role in their linguistic identity. All of the nineteen speakers had taken part in some sort of institutional education in Russian language. Many participants had the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue, but these project-based forms were ad hoc and have short lived. Many people complained about the scarcity of teaching materials or the poor qualifications of teachers.

The youngest participants unless they were born in aboriginal family with a Dolgan/Nenets/Enets mother and father. They explain that their parents did not consider it important to speak with their child at home. All of them spoke Russian with other family members as well. So they don't speak their mother tongue at all.

I never spoke the mother tongue, they didn't speak to me. 4EM1990s

There are also some middle-aged interviewees, who did not have opportunity to learn their language as an L1. As for their family background, their parents are aboriginal people who decided to speak Russian with their children so that they could manage better in the Russian majority community.

Grandpa and grandma spoke half Enets half Nenets , so I can say words sometimes which the Nenets people don't understand. My mom didn't speak Nenets and I was born into a Russian-speaking family, and Karaul is also mostly a Russian-speaking village 1NF31980s

I do not speak my mother tongue at all, because I lived in the city and was raised in a boarding school, where it was forbidden to speak our mother tongue. I was at home only on weekends and during the holidays. We lived in the Arctic Soviet, raising cows, chickens, which means there was Russian population. So they never spoke to me in my native language, even at home. They only spoke to each other when relatives arrived, the children went out to play and they talked to themselves. Neither my grandfather nor my grandmother had raised me. Older people still understand a few things. My brothers understand, but they don't speak either. 11DF1970s

The traditional fishing hunter lifestyle, and the traditional living space contributing to the maintenance of the heritage language. Rural conditions are conducive to the preservation of the language not only among elderly people. Two men said that moving to the city later did not

forget their mother tongue, but they experienced changes in their language and language use, and they are ashamed of this.

In the village, grandma, mom, aunt all speak, everyone speaks the language, even the little kids, when we are sitting by the fire. 3DF1990s

For eight years I lived in the tundra with relatives, hunting, fishing, living nomadic lifestyle, till that time I only spoke my mother tongue. I didn't forget it. I've just started adding Russian words. We used to poke each other with this: Why do you speak Russian? For example, when you're interviewing on the radio and you forget how one word is in Nenets. 7NM1980s

I spoke well my mother tongue. But then I moved here. I have accent since I've been lived in the city. I'm ashamed, I do not put the words in the correct order. But I am afraid of being laughed. I can write freely without any difficulty 2NM1990s

I was very lucky. I had the opportunity to stay with my parents until grade 3 because there opened a school in our village. So I didn't have to spend nine months away in the boarding school like my brothers did. My brothers could not say almost nothing in Dolgan except "hello" "come here". I understand words, but I can't speak. There was nothing left for me, not a word. I don't understand what they are telling me. 13DF1970s

Language of upbringing and education

In accordance with Russian educational practice since the Soviet regime, children are collected and taken to a boarding school from those settlements where were not school. All interviewees reported on the difficult years of starting school. Changing the language and the foreign environment definitely put a strain on their childhood. Regardless of age, there are some who have experienced these years as a serious psychological trauma.

We were taken to school around the age of eight. We were taken there on the back of reindeers We had to leave the lake where we fished and lived. Today's children speak Russian before they get to school. We knew nothing. I was almost ten when I got there. We went to grade 0, preparatory class, so we had to learn first Russian there. Then at the first grade we learned to read. We were only with our parents from June to August. It was a big psychological trauma for me. I really wanted to go home. But I didn't spoke anyone about this. I was afraid. I didn't want to learn at all. I cried in the morning. Who invented this? Why do I need this? Everything was strange for me. Foreign clothes, different smells, different language. Everything was very strange. All I heard in my head was I want to go home. I cried when we went to bed in the evening, and I cried also, when we got up in the morning. I always cried.

We have to study was spoken on the seventh of November. V.I Lenin told us they said.. Lenin's portrait was hanging on the dining room's wall. I was a very conscientious child. After the speeches I ran to Lenin and looked up at him. Why do you need us to be here and learn? Why is this good for you? I do not want to. He just looked at me. As a kid, we didn't understand what it was and would be good for. We didn't understand anything about this. 18EF1950s

Mom was taken to boarding school and banned from speaking her mother tongue. But luckily my kids are learning Nenets at school. 1NF1990s.

At the school they hurt us many times not to use our language, because it sounds like we're fighting. Its intonation is different. 8NgM1980s

When I arrived at school I couldn't speak anything but a word or two. But you can learn quickly in childhood. I also had problems at first, and then I learned. It's good that our kids can speak Russian when they go to school, because they understand something. 6NF1990s

I was very lucky. I had the opportunity to stay with my parents until grade 3 because there opened a school in our village. So I didn't have to spend nine months away in the boarding school like my brothers did. 13DF1970s

According to the participants, the personality of the teachers mattered a lot. Native language teachers were able to help their students with their initial L2 learning difficulties.

When we got to school, we didn't speak Russian at all. I just started adding Russian words when I started studying. At first it was unpleasant. Russian was very difficult. We didn't have lessons with our teacher at first, we just played, we draw, and through the game we started talking. We didn't even notice that we can speaking fluently. 7NM1980s

I also learned Nenets at school. Our teacher was very good native Nenets teacher. It was easier that way. She helped us slowly through the difficult period when we had to learn Russian. I remember when we were had a Russian-speaking teacher, we didn't understand anything. We are glad that our children are learning from grade 0 and they can speak Russian. 10NF1970s

Good thing there is a language nest in the villages, Volochanka and Usty Avam. 8NgM1980s

Individual norms and attitudes: attitudes to language and culture maintenance efforts

We want to learn, but there are no textbooks. 4EM1990s
If you don't know the language, you don't know anything. 2NM1990

I do not speak my native language. I'm very ashamed of this. I can just sing, but the others always help me here. I think I'm going to learn for the rest of my life by the age of 100. Language is very important to me and I'm trying to learn it. I haven't succeeded yet, but I'm trying very hard. It's a big minus if you are an aboriginal inhabitant of Taimyr and you don't speak your own language. 1NF1990s.

If we can't speak the language or sing, then we show ourselves through clothes, our culture. That's why we started. 5DM1990s

We're speaking Nenents at home. My partner speaks very well, we have three kids, the oldest boy understands everything but he doesn't want to speak. They don't want to speak Nenents at all. I didn't care about this before, but now I think language is very important. When my

brothers come, I look forward to speaking with them. And not only the language is important, but to be proud of your own nationality is important from childhood.7NM1980s.

Now it is clear to me: if there is no language, there will be no people. And, of course, people in this age are trying to learn from the older generation. I go to the 'Aradoj' choir, sing songs in Dolgan. 11DF1970s

I understand more, but I can't speak. There was nothing left for me, not a word. I don't understand what they are telling me. That's why I used to go to sing in the chorus.

I can't teach my little daughter either, so she has to go singing also. If we with my husband sometimes say something Dolgan to kids, they just looking at us.13DF1970s

It is difficult to keep your language in urban conditions. But it can be. We try to preserve it. Here is our family club, Maj'ma. We've been doing this for 15 years. We collect, and hold the language. For who? To ourselves, to the community, to our children, who have since grown up slowly. People were always welcome from project to project.10NF1970s

I try with my children very hard: I bring the kids to the stage, we repeat. The old aunts are there, and they are asking them too. Let's repeat the tales. Slowly, not every day succeeds. You can catch them on weekends. 8NgM1980s

I want to go back to the village to teach in Ust Avam. I think I did a lot of work with the linguists. I want to go back there. I don't feel somehow here. I feel like I'm doing this work here only for the culture and not for the Nganasans. I want to do for the Nganasans. I have to go back there to talk, to teach them. There are young teachers only who do speak the language. They teach only by the book. But what kind of language is in the book? It must be lively! Hear, hear lively things! I want to go there in September. We are here, but we are needed there. I have grandchildren, great-grandchildren there. I always talk to them. 15NgF1950s

No one is familiar with these tales anymore. I have to work on the book.16NgF1950s

I went home from school in the fifth grade, let's speak at home only in Nganasan. Out on the street in Russian, but at home inside only in Nganasan! Who and why? Nobody understood. I always liked listening to the old people. Uncle came to us, I always listened to their talk and tales. I sat in the corner and listened. The others were playing outside. Where is Sveta? They were looking for me. I was sitting inside. Every song I sing lately, I owe it all to me because I was sitting there and listening. I barely understood, but I noted it. Then I took these songs line by line from O. D's book.

They opened a language nest in our village, including nganasan, and my little daughter started to go there. Then at 14 we moved here, read, a little bit. I'm teaching them. But I'm half-done, right. My son speaks Dolgan fluently, and he understand well Nganasan, but do not speak. Mom teach me Nganasan! I'm teaching them. To speak to sing to read. I sit at home, there are CDs, I put it in, I turn on it and start singing. 14NgF1970s

Language and identity. “The Identity game”

Central to this paper is the investigation of the link between identity and language. Such discussions touch upon the notion of ethnic identity and what elements it is composed of in case of the indigenous peoples in Taimyr Peninsula. Thus, a deeper understanding of what exactly the linguistic and non-linguistic markers of this identity mean for the indigenous peoples would inevitably contribute important data to these increasingly significant debates.

In this section of the interview my aim was, therefore, was to grasp how salient the heritage language really was in today’s ethnic identity according to participants’ perceptions. First, I will show how interviewees perceive the importance of their language in their ethnic identity in general, and then I will present findings on their perceptions of the non-linguistic aspects of their own identity. My intention here is to see how the language relates to other identity markers in case of each interviewee.

As demonstrated above how interviewees relate to their language as an important element of today’s ethnic identity. Although interviewees have undoubtedly identified themselves as indigenous people and shown an altogether positive attitude towards their language, they do not require the knowledge of the language to be the most significant criterion when identifying someone as a member of the given community. It is apparent from the interviews that participants perceive principally indigenous ancestry and also the traditional way of living and thinking as the most salient aspects of their own ethnic identity, i.e. non-linguistic elements are ranked in front of the linguistic one.

Despite the fact that the aim of this paper is to identify how participants perceive the salience of the linguistic element of their own ethnic identity, this paper would not be complete without considering the non-linguistic aspects as well. This provides a more complete and insightful profile of participants’ perception of their own ethnic identity. Accordingly, in the next section I will discuss the variation depicted in individual perceptions of the importance of non-linguistic aspects, making reference to the salience of language as well.

The ‘identity game’ was designed to conclude the interview in order to provide opportunity for the participants to reflect more freely on their own ethnic identity and on its constituents. The items related were printed on pieces of paper, and participants were asked to arrange them in order of importance, i.e. to put the item that describes their ethnic identity the best in the first place and the one that describes it the least in the last place. Table 2 illustrates the relative importance of each item as each participant perceives them.

Turning to the individual differences in ranking the identity elements, the following variables are considered during the analysis: (1) ethnic identification, (2) self-assessed proficiency in heritage language, (3) the language of upbringing, (4) ancestry, and (5) type of occupation, i.e. whether it is related to traditional culture or not. During the presentation of the findings I focus on showing which category is perceived by the participant as the most important constituent of his or her identity, and/or how participants reflect on the arrangement of these categories.

Close relatives	H	61
Language	L	66
Religion, traditional holidays	T	84
Folk art, handicrafts	T	88
Traditional way of life (reindeer hunting/herding, fishing, living in tundra)	T	96
Folklore, fairy tales, stories, songs	T	101
Living in Taimyr	T	102
Active participation in the activities of local cultural organizations	C	111
Contact with the community, participation in cultural events	C	114
Eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	T	118
External / internal properties	H	148

Table 2. Results of the ‘identity game’

We have drawn up categories involved in the construction of indigenous identity in Taimyr. These categories are 1) traditions, traditional ways of living, traditional territory of living (marked as T), 2) the language (marked as L), 3) keeping contact with the community (marked as C), and 4) inheritance: the reception of genetic qualities by transmission from parent to offspring (marked as H)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	N	N	D	E	D	N	N	Ng	Ev	N	D	D	D	Ng	Ng	Ng	Ev	E	Ng
Close relatives	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	5	7	3	9	1	1	1	4	2	2
Language	5	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	7	4	7	4	2	1	1	1	2
Religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	7	6	2	7	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	2	8	6	4	2	3	3	3
Folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	4	2	2	6	3	3	1	7	1	6	3	1	6	3	5	1	5	3	3
Traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	6	4	2	4	4	1	1	5	3	1	7	3	1	11	3	3	2	5	2
Folklore, tales, stories, songs	8	5	4	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	5	3	5	5	6	3	1	4	3
Living in Taimyr	2	2	1	10	5	2	1	2	3	7	2	5	0	9	9	1	9	5	1
Taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	4	3	4	5	2	3	1	6	2	4	1	4	3	2	7	3	10	5	4
Keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	4	3	4	5	2	3	1	6	2	3	1	5	4	8	10	2	6	4	5
Eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	9	8	3	8	3	2	1	4	3	1	7	2	2	7	8	4	7	3	3
External internal properties	3	7	3	9	5	4	1	5	4	8	6	2	10	10	11	3	8	5	2

Table 3. Detailed results of the ‘identity game’

The first member of the younger generation is dancer **1NF1980s**, working at the City Centre of Folk Art in Dudinka, her L1 is Russian, she does not speak her mother tongue. She has Nenets ancestry but the grandparents had already spoken with each other in her mother's family. She grew up in a Russian speaking village. Her mom was a dancer too, and she grew up behind the scenes and wanted to be a dancer all her life. She is a competent choreographer. As it is revealed in the table below, she ranks the language as only the 5th most important constituent of her identity preceded by contact-related constituents, i.e. keeping contacts with the community and taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations. Fundamental element in her identity construction are the constituents of inheritance (the reception of genetic qualities by transmission from parent to offspring) and traditional living space and folk art, which is her job. She is proud of that she was born and lived in Taimyr and she is very ashamed of that she does not speak her language. Even though she was delighted to talk about the other traditional constituents, she still ranked them lower.

close relatives		
living in Taimyr		
external internal properties		
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
language		
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)		
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs		
folklore, tales, stories, songs		
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish		

My greatest sorrow, I do not speak my native language. I'm very ashamed of this. I can just sing, but the others always help me here. Language is very important to me and I'm trying to learn it. I haven't succeeded yet, but I'm trying very hard. 1NF1980s

Cooking a traditional dish: Well, this is my daily life, my mother and grandmother always cooked, they cooked in the tundra. Yes, there are accessories, Russian things like eggs. I like fish the most. I put it in the last place because it's just a habit, it doesn't matter, it's just my personal habit. 1NF1980s

2NM1990 is also a Nenets dancer working at the City Centre of Folk Art in Dudinka and he is a student of choreography in Kemero also. He is a fluent speaker of his mother tongue, he is a good speaker, but he consider that he has better skills in writing than in speaking. Language is very important for him. He decided to put the language after close relatives as very salient aspect of his ethnic identity with folk art and traditional homeland.

close relatives		
language	living in Taimyr	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)		
folklore, tales, stories, songs		
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs		
external internal properties		
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish		

If you don't know the language, you don't know anything. 2NM1990

3DF1990s is a Dolgan student at the Taimyr College

3DF1990s

language	living in Taimyr	close relatives
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
external internal properties		eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	folklore, tales, stories, songs

4EM1990s is a Enets student at the Taimyr College

close relatives	
language	
folklore, tales, stories, songs	
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	
external internal properties	
living in Taimyr	

5DM1990s is a Dolgan student at the Taimyr College

5DM1990s

close relatives		religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
language	taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)		eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)		folklore, tales, stories, songs
living in Taimyr		external internal properties

6NF1990s is a Nenets student at the Taimyr College

6NF1990s

traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	close relatives		religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
language	living in Taimyr		eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	folklore, tales, stories, songs
external internal properties			

7NM1980s

language traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra) living in Taimyr taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events close relatives folk art (handicrafts, costumes) religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs folklore, tales, stories, songs external internal properties eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
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8NgM1980s

language	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
living in Taimyr	folklore, tales, stories, songs
close relatives	
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	
external internal properties	
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	

9EvM1970s

religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
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taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events			folklore, tales, stories, songs
language	traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	living in Taimyr	close relatives	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
external internal properties				

10NF1970s

traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	folklore, tales, stories, songs	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish		
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events		religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs		
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations				
close relatives				
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)				
living in Taimyr				
external internal properties				

11DF1970s

taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations		keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events		
living in Taimyr				
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)				
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs				
folklore, tales, stories, songs				
external internal properties				
language	traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	close relatives	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	

12DF1970s

folk art (handicrafts, costumes)				
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs		external internal properties	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)		close relatives	folklore, tales, stories, songs	
language			taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	
living in Taimyr				
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events				

13DF1970s

Living	traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)
	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
	taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations
	keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
in	folklore, tales, stories, songs
	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
Taimyr	language
	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
	close relatives
	external internal properties

14NgF1970s

close relatives
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
language
folklore, tales, stories, songs
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
living in Taimyr
external internal properties
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)

15NgF1950s

close relatives
language
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
folklore, tales, stories, songs
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish

living in Taimyr
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events
external internal properties

16NgF1950s

language	living in Taimyr	close relatives	folk art (handicrafts, costumes)
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	folklore, tales, stories, songs	
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	external internal properties	
eating habits, cooking a traditional dish			

17EvF1940s

language	folklore, tales, stories, songs
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	
religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	
close relatives	
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	
external internal properties	
living in Taimyr	
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	

18EnF1940s

language			
close relatives			
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish	
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events	folklore, tales, stories, songs		
traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	living in Taimyr	taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations	external internal properties

29NgF1960s

living in Taimyr			
language	traditional way of life (reindeer herding, fishing, living in the tundra)	close relatives	external internal properties
folk art (handicrafts, costumes)	religion, traditional holidays, habits, beliefs	folklore, tales, stories, songs	eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
taking parts in the activities of local cultural organizations			
keeping contacts with the community, participation in cultural events			