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“Сувениры Севера”
Minority identity and discourse:
Representation of indigenous minorities of
Northern Russia in the digital media
The case of Dudinka¹

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1. Introduction

This paper examines the representation of indigenous minorities of Northern Russia in the local online media, focusing on the relationship between language, culture, and ethnic identity. Using a critical sociolinguistic and discourse analytic approach, we analyze the discursive representation of five indigenous minorities on three digital media platforms: in the news of a state-run online newspaper, and the social media platforms of two indigenous cultural centers.

Based on the results, we show how indigenous languages and identities are represented in the online discourse, which elements of minority identity are referred to and in what ways, and how they are also mixed and intertwined with other local and global identities. The media representation of the indigenous languages and communities reveals a lot about how people see identity categories and relations, which attitudes, ideologies and values are tied to them, and, therefore, it helps to identify locally relevant status and factors concerning minority language and identity. Furthermore, public representations are important because they not only reflect but also construct language and identity categories and, shaping how people see themselves and others or indigenous languages in general, they may influence the status and processes related to minority identity and indigenous languages in the examined communities.

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, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2015-2020.

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1.1. Aims and research questions

The research reported on here is part of a larger project aimed at examining linguistic and cultural identity and the integration of minorities into a multilingual urban environment among representatives of northern indigenous multilingual communities living in the urban settlements of Far North Russia and Finland. In this study, we focus on five indigenous minorities (the Nenets, the Dolgans, the Nganasans, the Evenkis, and the Enets) living in Dudinka, a city in northern Russia, and investigate their representations on the online media platforms in terms of the connection between language, culture, and minority identity.

The main research questions of the study are as follows: How are the indigenous language and minorities represented in the discourses of local digital media? What are the main social identity categories represented in these texts? What relationships are shown between the indigenous language, culture, and minority community? How is the minority language used and/or mentioned in these discourses, and to what extent is language presented as an essential part of ethnic identity? Which other markers of ethnic minority are also used and maintained as elements of identity after indigenous people leave their traditional way of life and move to the urban environment of a modern city? How is the minority identity connected or intertwined with other – local and global – identities?

The theoretical and methodological resources of the study – beyond common sociolinguistic knowledge concerning minority languages and communities – are from critical sociolinguistics (Blommaert 2016, Pietikäinen 2008) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992), combined with a digital ethnographic perspective (Varis 2015).

The aim of the analysis is to gain insight into the recent concepts and categories connected to language and minority identity of the indigenous communities in this northern Russian city. To do that, this article seeks to involve new methods of sociolinguistic investigation – especially discourse analysis – and to expand research to the discourse of digital media, which has become a central space of public communication of our time. It plays a pivotal role also in the representation and construction of social relations and identities, typically connected to various communication practices and techniques.

Very few sociolinguistic studies have been conducted on these small indigenous languages and minorities of Northern Russia such as the Nenets, Dolgan, Nganasan, Enets, and Evenki communities. Although many linguistic works investigate them, but these focus on the grammatical description of languages, while sociolinguistic aspects are much less researched.

Most sociolinguistic studies use traditional methods, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, or field observation. Digital discourses, online media, and social media

have not so far been included in these analyses – this also increases the novelty and relevance of the present study. An important exception is the outstanding work by Pietikäinen, primarily on the Sami communities and languages, in which she uses critical discourse analysis and a critical sociolinguistic and ethnographic approaches and, in analyzing media discourse (Pietikäinen 2003, 2008, 2018), provides significant information about Sami people and language use.

These minorities in Northern Russia are in a similar sociolinguistic situation as the Sami, but there are some differences as well, e.g. a smaller number of speakers or the even more severely endangered situation of the languages (Mosely 2010) with minimal or no revitalization tendencies. Our analysis will hopefully help explore the role of language and its relationship with minority identity among these communities, and other sociolinguistic phenomena as well, which are locally relevant for them. The results contribute to a better understanding of the recent sociolinguistic situation of these languages, but from a broader perspective, they may be related to other endangered languages or minorities as well.

1.2. Theoretic background and methods

The theoretical and methodological background of this study drew mainly on theories and concepts of critical sociolinguistics, combined with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, Wodak and Meyer 2009) and a digital ethnographic perspective (Varis 2015). We relied especially on the work of Blommaert on globalization, superdiversity, mobility and complexity (Blommaert 2016, Blommaert and Rampton 2011), and the research and concepts of Pietikäinen concerning cultural hybridization, news representation, identity, and the language use of the Sami people (Pietikäinen 2003, 2008, 2010, and 2018).

Research on minority languages and identity has had a long history in traditional sociolinguistics and, recently, in the new sociolinguistic work, often referred to under the umbrella term “critical sociolinguistics” or “sociolinguistics of globalization”. This latter approach highlights the pivotal role of globalization, digitalization, mobility and diversity in sociolinguistic processes:

“Over the past two decades, globalization has altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world. [...] The demographic and social changes are complicated by the emergence of new media and technologies of communication and information circulation”, [...] with people getting involved in transnational networks that offer potentially altered forms of identity, community formation and cooperation” (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 1.).

To describe this ongoing, multiple, and complex sociolinguistic processes, recent sociolinguistic studies have provided a number of new concepts and terms such as, for instance, superdiversity, translanguaging, hybridity, transnationalism, multilingualism, plurilingualism etc., emphasizing the need for a more complex, dynamic view of sociolinguistic perspective”, in which, mobility, mixing, political dynamics central concerns in the study of languages, and communication” (Blommaert 2016, Pennycook 2016, Bartha ed. 2016, Bodó and Heltai 2018 for an overview).

In this approach, based on social constructionists theories, identity is viewed as a socially constructed, multiple and complex category, as “multiple, dynamic sites of struggle and investment, as the object of multiple discourses” (Pietikäinen 2018: 185), which has dynamically changing boundaries and is “unfixed, fluid, multiple, as process continuing across times, places, positions, practices and discourses [...], a matter of becoming as well as of being” (Hall 1996, Pietikäinen 2003). Our study draws upon this approach of social identity, implying that discourse, communication practice and, especially, public discourse and media representations have a pivotal role with regard to identity relations: they reflect and reveal the boundaries of identity categories and various attitudes, ideologies and evaluations connected to them, but they also construct these categories, shaping how people see themselves and others. This is particularly important in relation to language and connections between minority language and identity; there is a “whole web of intertwined discourses, practices, and emotions related to the production of identity and language categories, and the relationship between the two” (Pietikäinen 2018).

This approach and concepts are especially useful for investigating indigenous languages and communities in northern Russia, since they are particularly affected by political, economic and social changes, mobility and the multiple effects of globalization and a modern urban environment. The term mobility in this case does not only imply geographic movement (from rural to urban areas) but also profound social and economic changes, which all have severe effects on minority languages and identity, causing various – often adversarial – processes and changes. As Pietikäinen describes, based on her longitudinal research on language and identity of the Sami people:

“amid the turbulent currents of global changes, the once-peripheral spaces of the Arctic now lie at the epicenter of an ambivalent conjunction of at least three major forces: climate change, expanding economic interest and cultural transformation. Under these changing circumstances, language and identity boundaries that have so far been used primarily for social structuration and political projects have become also resources for economic development in

the context of the new economy of experience tourism and markets of authenticity” (Pietikäinen 2018: 184).

Also, “linguistic and other semiotic resources are used not only for communication and building an indigenous community, but they function also as a commodity in global music markets and tourism, or as a resource for creative identity performance” (Pietikäinen 2003: 79).

By analyzing minority representation in media news and posts, we rely on a critical discourse analytic approach (Fairclough 1995, Wodak and Meyer 2009). Both from the field of sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis, numerous studies have proven that public discourses and, especially, digital media and news play an important role concerning minorities, their languages, and minority identity:

“identity consists partly of the ways in which we are represented. The media are an important and influential public space of contemporary society [...]; among various other public portrayals, news representations are crucial in representing culture, people, politics and social life: news representations contribute to ways in which people see themselves, their own identity and that of others, and the relations between 'us' and 'them' . [...] News, therefore, reveals a great deal about a society and its power relation” (Pietikäinen 2003: 589).

Public discourse reflects a lot about boundaries and elements of identities and reveals locally relevant categories, attitudes, relations and evaluations. In this paper, we analyze the news mainly from this perspective, to explore general characteristics of locally relevant categories and relations. However, also the constructive potential of these representations must be strongly emphasized: discourse is not only shaped by, but also shapes social structures and relations, it “contributes to the creation and constant recreation of the relations, subjects [...] and objects which populate the social world” (Fairclough 1995).

It is important to notice that not only the representations found in the texts are important: something that is *not* represented plays a role as well, i.e. what is absent or omitted from texts, since the lack of representation is also a way of construction (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 114, Fairclough 1995: 210). In addition to discourse analysis, we also use a digital ethnographic perspective to reveal locally specific digital practices and semiotizations related to social identity categories and the “lived local realities” (Varis 2015: 55).

For investigating the representation of minorities, we collected and analyzed news articles and posts from three local digital media sources: (1) the Krasnoyarsk regional online newsletter *Taimyr Telegraf* (TT), (2) the official website of the City Folk Art Center of Dudinka (FAC); and, finally, (3) the Facebook page of the House of Folk

Arts of Taimyr – Chum (Ch). The three sources have slightly diverse genres (newspaper vs. social media posts) and different perspectives (from the position of the state and the members of community itself), thus, the database created from this collection of news covers a wider range of local discourses and representations. For this paper, we analyze this database as a whole, focusing on a general description of the characteristics, main aspects and elements of minority representation; we do not address further questions such as, for instance, differences between the state-run media and the community platforms, or longitudinal changes in the media representations of minorities etc., as these aspects should be explored in future studies.

In line with critical sociolinguistic and digital ethnographic principles, we completed the textual investigation with multimodal analysis involving pictures and other visual elements from the news, “moving from ‘language’ in the strict sense towards semiosis as our focus of inquiry, and from ‘linguistics’ towards a new sociolinguistically informed semiotics as our disciplinary space” (Blommaert and Rampton 2011).

In 2019, the relationship between languages and minorities was a particularly significant issue, as the UN has declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Therefore, we placed this period at the center of our research and built the database from the news articles and posts published during this year, from January 1 to December 31, 2019. We analyzed the news from various perspectives, for instance: How many posts and articles were published with regard to indigenous issues? Which topics were frequently involved? Were indigenous languages used or mentioned and if so, in what form or by which terms? Which ethnic groups and other social identity categories appeared in these discourses? What kind of representations were put forward, and how do they contribute to the construction of indigenous identity, and/or to the position of the ethnicity? What were the main textual manifestations of ethnic representation? What kind of quotation patterns, key concepts and collocations, metaphors were typically used in news reports? Did also non-linguistic indices of indigenous identity – e.g. clothes, food, objects on pictures – appear in the observed media, and what role did they play as part of the visual and multimodal semiotic repertoire?

Although we conducted fieldwork in the communities in question to gain insight into local practices and situation, the analysis was not based on a priori categories but focused on the emergent categories and meanings in the discourse. Built on the findings, we present some quantitative data, for instance, on frequency, however, exact numbers do not have a central role, they serve mainly to show proportions and tendencies in the discourse.

In the next subsection, we give a brief overview of the role and specific features of digital media and communication on the Internet. Section 2 provides a brief

summary on the sociolinguistic background of the indigenous languages and minorities investigated in this paper. In section 3, a detailed analysis of various aspects of the news is presented, and, finally, section 4 contains a short discussion and conclusion.

1.3. The discourse in digital media: the role of the internet as a multimodal semiotic space of communication

In our age, the Internet is one of the most important spaces of social publicity. Information and communication technology has created new types of space-time relationships and is changing our way of life, our practical guide to communication, and identity formation. Cyberspace has the greatest impact not only on the delivery and processing of information but also on the development of social relations. It affects self-awareness and communities. The interactive social contact that takes place in it has a significant impact on individual people, changing their worldview and values (McRae: 1997). The Internet is both a public and a private space, providing a new terrain for experiencing the difference between individual and collective identity at the same time.

Social networks play an important role not only as a communication channel but also as a means of building organizations and mobilizing people. The fast and cheap access to information provided by the Internet encourages civic activism, which brings people together and helps them cross geographical and social boundaries, increasing public participation in social and political arenas. This is a public space that also provides an opportunity for social and political debates (Papacharissi 2003; Poster 1995).

Regarding the communication effects of cyberspace, two main factors can be highlighted. One is interactivity, which is primarily dominant in this medium, and whose wide range of possibilities has made social media sites, especially Facebook, unique. There is a need for interaction, an active collection of opinions, and “personal” contact with the audience. This was linked to various commenting opportunities; the social network thus created a specific interactivity that differs from both face-to-face and online forms of correspondence. For these, Facebook in particular provides many opportunities: liking, sharing, and commenting, through which the audience is mobilized, and not only activity, but also sympathy towards and commitment to a particular cause can grow. Manifestations expressing and/or creating identity are of paramount importance in this interactive social and societal space. Another defining feature of cyberspace is fragmentation. The information obtained online is mostly fragmented in nature, into fragments that show only one side of a question or are made up of randomly compiled opinions and unverified facts. At the same time, it also

shapes the mental environment, the context in which we create meanings and values, and in which reality is represented and constructed (Schement and Curtis 1997: 120).

Given the signifying power of the news media, the ways in which news represents various ethnic communities, issues related to multiculturalization and a changing society have significance in relation to the positions of various groups and to the relations between them. News is one of the most influential public spaces of contemporary society, perceived as offering stories about the world, its events and people. Minority media are often considered as a resource for promoting a sense of belonging and shared identity of the community, as well as offering a new domain for cultural and political participation. Indigenous people seek ways to take part in producing media publicity in their own terms because media space is seen as an important tool for identity politics, construction of community/nation, and revitalization of endangered languages. Minority language media are often considered to be an important element in revitalization of endangered languages. The terrain of minority media production and consumption is increasingly multilingual. The news can constitute an arena for constructing identity where the interests of different groups and regions will be heard and discussed (Allan 1999).

Many people believe that information technology and the cyberspace thus created destroy traditional forms of cultural and social relations, promote the expansion of global culture, and thus weaken local customs, cultures and traditions. At the same time, as the present study also points out, the interactions between the local and global spheres and the emergence of new forms of local character can also be observed. Many communities around the world have recognized the opportunities offered by cyberspace and they are working to strike a balance between the global and the local. They try to forge a capital from the uniqueness of their culture and from local nature (Mészáros 2001).

Cyberspace is a specific medium with significant economic implications. More and more people are realizing that a unique culture is a desirable product that attracts consumers, investment, and tourists. Therefore, in many cases, cities sell their cultural resources to gain capital (Lash and Urry, 1994). More and more city governing bodies and cultural institutions are establishing a virtual space for their city, with the intention that their presence on the Web will act as an economic factor for the benefit of the city. The cities of the world seem to be developing in two directions at once. They are less and less distinguishable from each other, becoming more global in nature and more homogeneous than before; at the same time, there is an emphasis on uniqueness and peculiarities, by which they try to present themselves as unique, different from all other places, in order to attract consumers. From these processes, a complex interaction of local and global traits emerges (Mészáros 2001).

2. Indigenous communities in Dudinka: geographic, demographic, and sociolinguistic background

Dudinka is a port city on the banks of the Yenisei, in the northernmost part of Siberia, beyond the Arctic Circle in Russia. Administratively, it also includes five villages: Volochanka, Levinskie Peski, Potapovo, Ust-Avam, and Khantaiskoe Ozero, which are located between 90 km to 340 km from Dudinka. It is the seat of the Taimyr district (Dolgan-Nenets) in the Krasnoyarsk Krai.

There are 21,978 people living in Dudinka (according to the city's official website on the basis of data from January 1, 2018) and 22,175 people according to the 2010 Russian census (the corresponding numbers were 25,132 in 2002, and 32,325 in 1989). The city is inhabited by five indigenous minorities in addition to the Russian majority: the Nenets and Dolgans in the largest numbers, as well as Nganasans, Evenkis, and Enets. Accurate data on the ethnic distribution of the urban population are rarely published: according to 2005 data, 1,328 of the 25,000 inhabitants were indigenous, representing only 5.3% of the urban population (Siegl 2013). According to the latest, 2019 data from the local administration, the city is home to 786 indigenous people, 390 of them Nenets, 111 Nganasans, 71 Evenkis and 24 Enets. Thus, indigenous peoples make up 9.9% of the town's population.

The official language of the city is Russian. The members of the indigenous population are very different and diverse in terms of language skills depending on the individual and the ethnic community, and their language use habits are also very variable. Whereas for some a language is their mother tongue, for others it is learnt in school or later in life. There are also people who hardly speak their heritage language.

The older generations are mainly those who speak and use the indigenous language. They work mostly in the educational and cultural centers, in the media, where the indigenous minority culture, language and identity have been preserved. However, the larger proportion of communities have little or no knowledge of their mother tongue.

On the list of endangered languages by UNESCO, each of these languages is listed as severely endangered (see Moseley 2010). Although to a very small extent, in recent decades revitalization efforts can be observed in the city: family clubs have been established (in the Nenets, Dolgan, and Nganasan communities), events, classes, language courses have started, “language nests” and summer schools have been established. However, these are mainly ad hoc, project-based initiatives of the state. The teaching of minority languages is the prerogative of some schools only, and they teach only one indigenous language (Nenets, Nganasan, or Dolgan) even in the absence of mother tongue teachers and teaching materials. Students can learn them as a foreign language in 2 to 4 hours a week.

3. Analysis

3.1. The corpus

For the present study, the preparation and data collection lasted one year, from January to December 2019. In the course of this, we processed three different online media sources of different genres, themes, scope, and operational backgrounds: (1) the news published on the official website of the City Folk Art Center of Dudinka (FAC); (2) the news on the Facebook page of the House of Folk Arts of Taimyr – Chum (Ch), and finally (3) the news of the Krasnoyarsk regional online newsletter *Taimyr Telegraf* (TT).

The first two media sources are connected to the folk art centers: they are maintained, edited, and operated by their staff, their primary purpose and aim is to report on the events of the centers. The *Taimyr Telegraf* is a broader, general purpose news portal, a state run and centrally edited online newspaper that provides news about the Krasnoyarsk region, with a more comprehensive view, not limited to indigenous minorities or cultural events.

	<i>Taimyr Telegraf</i> (TT)		Facebook page of the House of Folk Arts of Taimyr – Chum (Ch)		official website of the City Folk Art Center of Dudinka (FAC)	
	total	indigenous	total	indigenous	total	indigenous
2019						
January	177	5	3	3	1	0
February	221	6	5	4	6	3
March	214	3	4	4	2	0
April	224	2	7	6	4	2
May	208	4	8	8	4	2
June	208	2	0	0	1	0
July	242	4	1	1	1	1
August	196	6	5	5	2	2
September	181	8	4	4	4	4
October	244	7	10	9	7	7
November	215	27	4	3	2	2
December	220	9	10	8	3	2
Σ	2,550	47	63	57	37	25

Table 1. Distribution of news articles by month, highlighting those dealing with indigenous peoples

Examining the year 2019, we can see from the data that, due to its nature and genre, the Taimyr newsletter is much more extensive, therefore we find a significant difference in the occurrence of indigenous-themed news compared to the other two media sources (only 1.8% of the news deals with indigenous peoples). On the other two examined sites, indigenous-themed statements dominate (Ch: 90%, FAC: 67%). Due to its genre, the Taimyr newsletter is thematically broader, not only the topics of folk art, culture, language, and customs appear in the news, but also the issues of economy and politics are given a strong emphasis. It is a state medium, where news is edited and texts are written by employees, while the news and entries of the two folk art centers are written by the members of the indigenous minorities themselves. All of this results in different perspectives and modes of construction; it is precisely these differences that justify the joint examination of the three media sources.

3.2. The representation of indigenous languages in texts: use and naming. The construction of identity categories

How do indigenous languages appear in media discourse? Indigenous language statements are seldom found in the examined texts only in very small numbers (Ch: 17 / FAC: 14 / TT: 13).

It can be ascertained that the use of indigenous languages in communication functions is not typical and frequent in these discourses, not even on the social media platforms, i.e. in the discourses of the indigenous community. These minority languages are used primarily in indexical functions, typically in the use of a single term, usually a name, such as that of an art group, person, place, or object related to indigenous culture:

<i>Клуб «Май"ма»</i>	Club ‘ <i>May'ma</i> ’
<i>участники семейного долганского клуба «Биирге»</i>	members of the family Dolgan club ‘ <i>Biirge</i> ’
<i>по сказке «Нохо-богатырь»</i>	according to the tale ‘ <i>Noho-hero</i> ’
<i>Счастливый из народа «Ня».</i>	Happy from the people of ‘ <i>Nya</i> ’

3.3. Labelling the members of the ethnic groups

Next we want to focus on a set of textual features of the news that are assumed to be central in representing indigenous minorities of Taimyr. We analyzed the lexicalizations referring to people living in Taimyr to find out how the members of the ethnic groups are referred in news texts. For the analysis we counted all words referring to indigenous peoples living in this area. Figure 1 shows the most common

labelling with numbers of occurrence and the list below it contains the names used in public groups living in Taimyr.

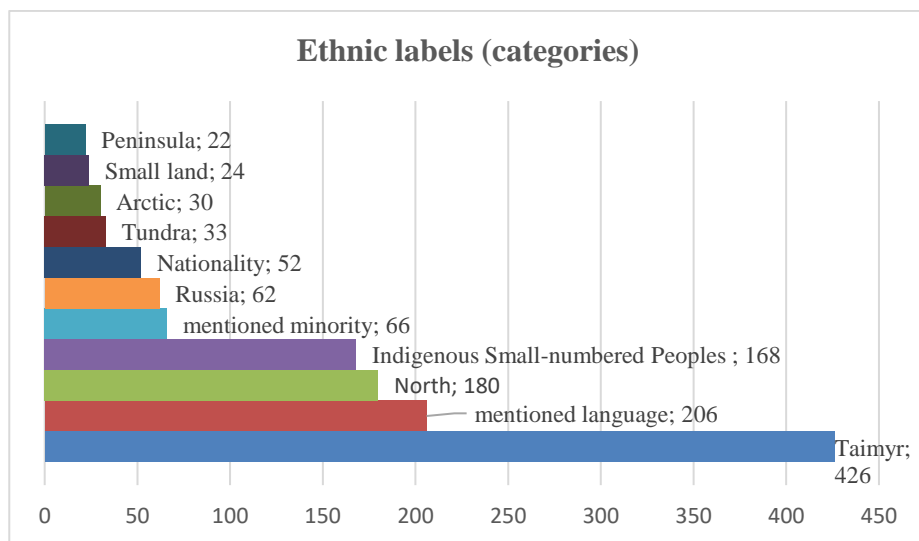


Figure 1. Ethnic labels in the articles

The lexicalizations referring to people living in Taimyr in the articles are the following:

Official names

Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation

Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East

Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the Far North

Indigenous Small-numbered Peoples of the North of the Krasnoyarsk Territory

Indigenous

indigenous dweller

indigenous peoples

indigenous population

indigenous ethnic groups: Nenets, Dolgans, Nganasans, Evenkis and Enets

Taimyr

indigenous dwellers of Taimyr

indigenous people of Taimyr

indigenous peoples of Taimyr

indigenous small-numbered peoples of Taimyr
indigenous dwellers of our peninsula
indigenous dwellers of the area
indigenous peoples of Russia
Taimyr
Taimyr treasures
Taimyrer / SUPER Taimyrer

North/Northerer

indigenous peoples of the North
indigenous small-numbered peoples living in the northern region
small-numbered peoples of the North
peoples of the Far North
peoples of the North
treasures of the North
northern peoples
northerners
nomad North
indigenous northerner-nomads
indigenous northern peoples
indigenous northerners

Arctic

Arctic Talents
Guardians of the Arctic
the polar capital
Arctic Circle Artists

Tundra

tundra people
people of the tundra
indigenous tundra population

Homeland

owners of our land
compatriot
Taimyrer compatriot
compatriot from the indigenous peoples of our peninsula
great patriots of the northern land
land of our ancestors

Examining the different group names and categories in the news, we can state the following: several larger categories appear and are equally common, such as: *Russia*, *Small-numbered Indigenous Peoples of Russia*, *Small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North and the Far East*, etc. It is important to mention that the minority vs. majority opposition is not observed at all. The concept of “minority existence” does not appear at all in these texts, these peoples are referred to by other names as indigenous peoples (according to the general use in Russia).

The ethnic categories of each nation are given an important role; in addition, local categories referring to the geographical location, such as *Taimyrian*, *Northerners*, *people of the tundra*, also appear prominently. We can make observations similar to Pietikainen’s 2003 observations in the Sami community. Taken together, these outline a distinctive northern / Taimyrian identity that unites these five indigenous minorities and is based on the experience of a common destiny, habitat, and way of life. The indigenous identity of the peoples in the Taimyr has been articulated through times and territories, and across changing political, cultural, and legal circumstances. This identity work has been a dialogue between the past and the present, between traditional and new conditions. This identity is fluid and multiple, it is a process across the times and places. It does not only involve language, livelihood or living in a specific area, but it also represents a deeper and more complex sense of belonging to a culture, family, and heritage that stretches over the North and across centuries. This Northern identity is also profoundly tied in with the region and the shared experience. Regardless of their ethnicity, people living in the same region share similar problems as inhabitants in their local communities. This is the familiar story of mixed marriages, of the gradual disappearance of minority culture, and of the oppression of the minority, resulting in, for example, their language shift; a high unemployment rate, the countryside emptying of people, and diminishing welfare services; the fragmentation of society and the hardening of walls between various ethnic groups.

3.4. Correlation with identity elements

Identity construction and the link between identity and language are the central topics of this investigation, thus, we seek a deeper understanding of what exactly the linguistic and non-linguistic markers of this identity mean for the indigenous peoples. To investigate this, we previously developed a special method for identity interviews called “Identity game” based on minority identity elements determined with the help of fieldwork observations and the results of our previous research (Duray 2019, Várnai 2018 and 2020). The following concepts were defined as the main components of the identity of the examined minorities: kinship, nationality of parents; traditions and culture; language; religion; knowledge of the past; and genetic similarity. Based on these, we constructed what we called the ‘Identity game’. During the ‘Identity

game’ conducted during our fieldwork in Enontekiö in 2016 and in Dudinka in 2019, we requested the participants to arrange constituents of the indigenous culture in order of importance with regard to their own ethnic identity. 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.

Comparing the data during the analysis we examine the individual elements in their relation to each other, so we get an overview of which elements of the minority identity of the communities undergoing language shift are the ones that come to the fore during assimilation and language shift. Each element was identified separately for the different urban communities studied. For the sake of comparability, we sought uniformity, but this principle could not be fully enforced. There were elements that all indigenous communities could claim, but there were some that were unique to one or another: for example, while being listed in the electoral register is an important element of the minority identity of the Sámi community in Finland, it is completely negligible for those living in Russia due to their different political status. Or, while traditional food is an important part of identity of communities in Russia, it should not be included among the identity elements in the case of Sami in Finland, as Sami traditional food is not different from the food of the majority Finnish cuisine. Table 2 illustrates the relative importance of each item as participants perceived them.

Results for Enontekiö (Zsuzsa Duray)	Results for Dudinka (Zsuzsa Várnai)
Close Sámi relatives	Close relatives
The Sámi language	Language
Reindeer herding and related activities	Religion, traditional holidays
Traditional Sámi costumes	Folk art, handicrafts
Keeping contacts with the Sámi community	Traditional way of life (reindeer hunting/herding, fishing, living in the tundra)
Sámi handicrafts	Folklore, fairy tales, stories, and songs
Fishing	Living in Taimyr
Living in Lapland	Active participation in the activities of local cultural organizations
Sámi indigenous religion	Contact with the community, participation in cultural events

Results for Enontekiö (Zsuzsa Duray)	Results for Dudinka (Zsuzsa Várnai)
Taking part in the activities of Sámi organizations	Eating habits, cooking a traditional dish
Being listed in the electoral register of the Sámi Parliament	External / internal properties
The Sámi joiks/Joiking	
Staying in a Sámi tent	

Table 2. Aspects and components of minority identity in Enontekiö and Dudinka

For a deeper understanding and a comparison of the results provided by different methods, we investigated how the aspects of minority identity examined in the ‘Identity game’ were represented – and if they were represented – in the self-initiated context of news discourses. The results are shown in Figure 2:

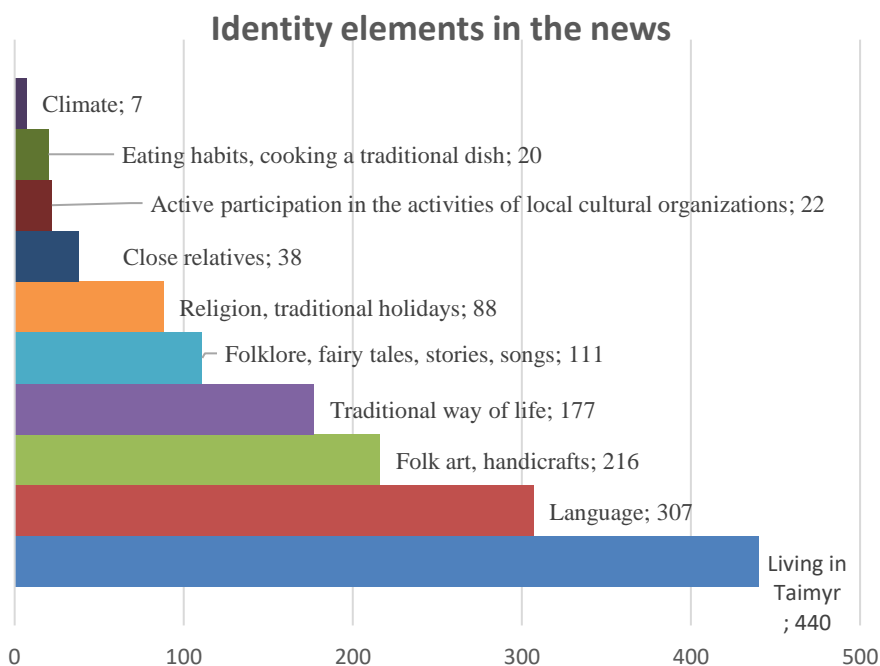


Figure 2. Representation of identity elements in the news

We can state that there are strong similarities between the lists of core components of ethnic minorities, both on the basis of data from a face-to-face interview-like situation and from public discourses.

Regarding the order of components, it should be noted that the genre characteristics of the media can influence the order of the elements to some extent: for example, close relatives as a topic does not play such a prominent role in the public media discourse as in the life of the individuals. Surprisingly, the category of local identity is especially prominent: ‘Living in Taimyr’ took first place. We observed in the articles a new element of identity as well: tolerance of the harsh climate and intemperate weather are mentioned with a positive emphasis, as a community-forming force:

“Как мужество, терпение и мудрость помогли выжить им в этих вечных снегах в течение долгих тысячелетий?”

“Каким образом в нечеловеческих условиях арктического климата нашли они силы и место в душе для любви к этой суровой, но родной для них земле?”
“красота северянок в контрасте с суровыми условиями жизни их сила воли, умение сохранять и передавать традиции предков новому поколению”

“В описуемых условиях могут выжить только сильные телом и духом люди! Не представляю, чтобы коренные северные народы согласились-бы жить в Африке.”

“How could courage, patience, and wisdom help them to survive in eternal snow for millennia?”

“How did they find enough strength and a place in their soul to love their harsh but native land in extreme conditions of the Arctic climate,”
 “the beauty of northerners is their willpower and ability to preserve and transmit the traditions of their ancestors to the new generations in contrast to the harsh living conditions.”

“In those conditions described, only people strong in body and spirit can survive! I can’t imagine the indigenous northern peoples agreeing to live in Africa.”

A significant finding is that the minority language takes a prominent position, too, occupying second place among the most frequently mentioned identity elements, which signals an outstanding role of language in minority identity. It is even more impressive if we consider that these minority languages were not used in communicative function in these discourses at all – not even in the news of the minority cultural centers – and appeared only in symbolic (indexical) function. In spite of their endangered status, the indigenous languages still seem to be considered as something particularly important and valuable for minority identity. These representations, however, may have been influenced by the “Year of Indigenous Languages” e.g. because of more frequent mentions – future research should explore the longitudinal tendencies in this respect.

3.5. Key concepts and collocations related to language

For further investigation of the role of language and the values connected to it, in this section we review the phrases in which language – or a language – is explicitly mentioned in the news. We have already seen that it is mentioned in a large number of articles.

<i>нганасанский/энецкий/долганский/н енецкий язык</i>	Nenets / Dolgan / Nganasan / Evenki / Enets languages
<i>уральскими тунгусскими языками / самодийских языков/ Языки Евразии</i>	Uralic and Tungusic languages / Samoyed languages / Eurasian languages
<i>языках коренных народов / Языки народов Таймыра / Языки и культура народов Севера</i>	Languages of Indigenous Peoples / Languages of the Peoples of Taimyr / Language and Culture of the Northern Peoples
<i>Международном Симпозиуме по языкам лингвистической типологии изучение синтаксических структур языков отработать языковые грамматику искусственный язык</i>	International Language Symposium of language typology studying the syntactic structures of languages develop grammar artificial language
<i>Международный год родных языков/ Международному году языков коренных народов</i>	International Year of Mother Tongues International Year of Indigenous Languages
<i>Дню языков коренных народов</i>	Day of Indigenous Languages
<i>приняли участие в языковых играх</i>	they participated in language games
<i>сохранения языков коренных народов Севера</i>	preserve the indigenous languages of the North
<i>развития языкового многообразия</i>	developing linguistic diversity

Table 3. Collocations in which “language” occurs

We can observe phrases where the languages of language families are mentioned, by linguistic terms, or phrases with the year of indigenous languages, most of them are related to each language. There is also a significant group of expressions where language is mentioned in connection with positive concepts, e.g. as a valuable phenomenon to be preserved; something that ought to be learned and loved; or as the language of the ancestors; expressions referring to the charm of the language, and

language as a great gift. In this group, language is presented in significantly positive collocations, conveying a positive attitude towards it, which is also an important message for the whole community.

<i>желание обучаться языкам</i>	desire to learn languages
<i>язык моих предков</i>	language of my ancestors
<i>изучать и любить свой язык</i>	learn and love your own language
<i>сохранение и развитие языков</i>	preservation and development of languages
<i>язык великий дар</i>	language is a great gift
<i>„не ослабевает желание обучаться языкам, на которых говорят коренные народы нашего полуострова”</i>	“The desire to learn the languages spoken by the Indigenous Peoples of our Peninsula does not diminish”
<i>«Вошебство родной речи»</i>	“The magic of the mother tongue”

Table 4. Collocations in which “language” occurs with positive concepts

3.6. Multimodal components of identity and visual representation

Examining the elements of indigenous identity in visual signs and pictures, they were found so numerous and connected with so many meanings that a broader analysis would require an independent, more extensive study. Hence, here we highlight only a few features that are particularly important for our present topic and represent the emergence of indigenous identity in an urban setting. Regarding visual indices, it can be stated that one of the most significant phenomena is the mixing of different contexts and (identity) domains: e.g. the mixing and co-occurrence of times, past and present. Similarly, the mixing of indices belonging to different cultural contexts and cultural identities – resulting in a “cultural hybridization” (Pietikäinen 2008) – is also a central phenomenon.



Figure 3. Indigenous woman celebrating the Day of the Indigenous Peoples of Taimyr (Source: Chum/facebook.com, 10. 08. 2019)

In the Figure 3 we can see a block of flats and a house with legs next to each other, an indigenous tent made of modern materials, decorated with Nenets ornaments. In this setting an indigenous woman takes part in the celebration of Argis, standing in front of them. She is adorned with jewelry sewn from traditional pearls, while at the same time wearing a modern T-shirt – connected to modernity, maybe even sportiness, and to the urban environment – with plastic-color-printed minority figures dressed in indigenous folk costumes.



Figure 4. Dolgans dressed in folk costumes with portraits of heroes of the Great Patriotic War (Source: Chum/facebook.com, 9. 05. 2019)



Figure 5. Children taking part in a celebration of the Great Patriotic War (Source: Chum/facebook.com, 8. 05. 2019)

In both Figures above, 4 and 5, we see the actors of the state holiday (the Great Patriotic War) show. On Figure 2 the members of the Dolgan dance group dressed in folk costumes are holding the portraits of heroes killed in the war. On Figure 3 we see children dressed in military uniforms playing on traditional instruments. The elements of different cultures, communities and historical events represented together on these pictures (and at these events in the real life) results also here in a shared – complex and hybrid – cultural category, which is, at the same time, a mixing and a kind of integrating frame. This hybrid identity category eliminates traditional boundaries and makes it possible, that people with different sociocultural backgrounds share a common identity and feel themselves to belong to a same community.



Figure 6. Greeting with flowers for State Women’s Day, an indigenous shaman woman drumming in the background (Source: Chum/facebook.com, 7. 03. 2019)

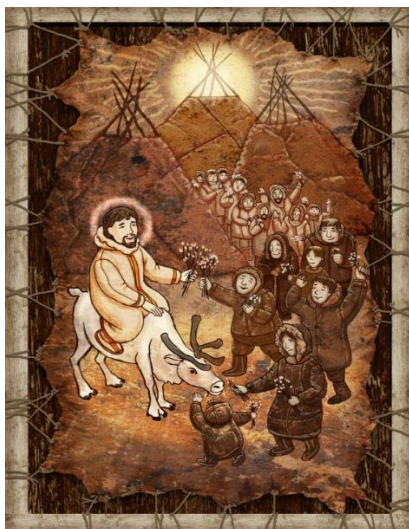


Figure 7. The cover of the Bible translated to Dolgan (Source: Chum/facebook.com, April 30, 2019)

In Figure 6, the elements of traditional culture (shaman woman with drum) are mixed with the motifs of a modern public holiday, belonging originally to the culture of the modernity and globalization (Women's Day). Figure 7 represents a leather picture stretched on a stylized wooden frame fashioned in traditional culture. In this traditional indigenous context, we see a scene of the arrival of Jesus – a central person of the Christian religion – who is sitting on a white reindeer, in traditional clothes among the natives with tents in the background.

On all this blending, one can observe the complex interaction of present and past, uniquely local and global, traditional and modern.

4. Conclusion

Summarizing the results of the analyses, the following can be stated:

1. The indigenous communities investigated here were represented frequently and salient in the local digital media discourse.
2. Their appearance on social media were typically accompanied by positive collocations and a very positive attitude (likes, comments).
3. In the content of the news, in the pictures and in the accompanied discourse – and by discourse – a peculiar world has been constructed, which, however, differs from the objective reality. It can be observed, for example, that problems and controversial issues affecting the indigenous people are not

represented in the news, they only can be inferred implicitly from other expressions:

<p><i>“Компания поддерживает программы, направленные на улучшение качества жизни коренного населения Таймыра, уделяет внимание проблеме сохранения языков коренных народов Севера”</i></p>	<p>“The company supports programs aimed at improving the quality of life of the indigenous people of Taimyr, pays attention to the problem of preserving the languages of the indigenous peoples of the North”</p>
<p><i>“Среди участников не раз была делегация Таймыра. Но в этом году в Якутск из-за отсутствия финансирования она не поехала.”</i></p>	<p>“Among the participants there was more than once a delegation from the Taimyr. But this year, due to lack of funding, they did not go to Yakutsk.</p>

These findings are remarkable if one considers that not only representations but also non-representations in discourse – absence of some groups or names, omitted information or implicitly-left contents –, which make things invisible or backgrounded, are important communication techniques that can shape and construct social categories, relations and, finally, even reality.

Several different group and identity categories appeared in news texts. Ethnic identity was a frequently mentioned category, represented in many ways and with many various components. However, interestingly, there was an important identity category, a kind of a local identity which occupied an outstanding position – first place – among identity aspects, and seems to be a central and particular prominent category, as a kind of broader “tundra”, “northern”, “Taimyr” identity, defined by the central concepts of the broader local (geographic) area and patriotism:

<p><i>“людей, которые проживают на Таймыре, – самое лучшее, яркое, достойное”</i></p>	<p>“The people who live in Taimyr are the best, the greatest, the most honorable”</p>
<p><i>“Самые самые СУПЕР Таймырцы”</i></p>	<p>“The most, most SUPER Taimyrians”</p>
<p><i>“великие патриоты северной земли”</i></p>	<p>“Great patriots of the northern land”</p>

Concerning the role of language, a significant finding is that minority language was a very frequently mentioned identity element which has tied to an outstanding position and value in minority identity. This is even more impressive if we consider that this minority languages were not used in communicative function in these

discourses, only in symbolic (indexical) function, and, according to sociolinguistic research, they have a weak, severely endangered position or even near to extinct. Still is the concept of minority language important, and closely connected to the minority identity, positive attitude and values. However, these positive representations can also be – at least partly – only a result of influence of the “Year of Indigenous Languages”.

Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by cyberspace, it can also be observed in the online discourse that the city seeks to attract consumption by “selling” itself on the Web (similar commodification is described by Pietikäinen within Sami communities, Pietikäinen 2010: 94). Emphasizing the unique local character, for instance, even a “Taimyr brand” is formulated:

<i>“Марка “Сделано в Арктике”</i>	“Brand ”Made in the Arctic””
<i>“высокий туристический потенциал полуострова”</i>	“High tourist potential of the peninsula”
<i>“о фестивале «Фольклорная классика Таймыра», который значит культурным брендом северной территории”</i>	“About the festival“ Folk Classics of Taimyr ”, which is a cultural brand of the northern territory”

Indigenous languages appeared only in indexical use in articles, but they were particularly salient (often mentioned). Thus, they convey a strong positive attitude towards the community. In all of this, it can also be observed that the positive display of indigenous identity and language, and the idealized, problem-free-constructed world represent even the indigenous people as a kind of “jewel”, as souvenirs of the North: “Сувениры Севера”. This representation is the same – only constructed by linguistic devices, in and through discourse – as representations of minorities in the typical tourist brochures, where indigenous people are shown dressed in traditional folk costumes standing in the front of their tents and surrounded by reindeers in vast Nord scenery, similar to the other stereotypical representations of the nature-dominated aboriginal people (Bird 1999; Tan et al. 1997; Wilson 1998). However, the concept of “souvenir” – as the meaning of this representations as well – is twofold: it means not only a valuable treasure, but also an additional “decoration”, a constructed scenery. Knowing the real linguistic and cultural situation of minorities, the latter meaning is rather relevant. However, even this idealized presentation, despite its false overtones, may have a constructing power and a positive, retaining effect on minorities: value-adding, appreciative, idealizing representation can have a positive impact on the attitudes of the communities. Thus, a possible effect is that this indigenous identity – which also includes the language that has hardly been spoken, but is considered valuable – will be considered more and more prominent in the city

and has chance to maintain, even if in some hybridized categories, a relevant part of his components and values.

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Taimyr Telegraf (TT): <http://ttelegraf.ru/>