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USING FREE-LISTING TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP MEASURES OF GROUP CONSENSUS: THE CASE OF LANGUAGE CHOICE IN UKRAINE

Free-listing is a useful qualitative technique suitable for exploring how groups of individuals think about a cultural domain and define its focal features. This tool is also well-adapted for identifying shared collective priorities which makes free-listing a helpful tool for ethnographers and students of culture who are often lacking this important information at the beginning of the project or have no fast way of acquiring it by other ethnographic means. One of its advantages includes its ability to elicit emic categories in the data at the early stages of fieldwork, thus securing the data quality in addition to its richness. The present study (N = 1253) conducted in January 2021 is part of a larger project merging cultural characteristics and electoral behavior. The data fragment presented in the paper showcases the utility of a free-listing technique for studying consensual beliefs relevant to language-based cultural identity in a sample of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking Ukrainians. The study this data was collected for explores whether the territorial cleavage in electoral behavior and language divide as a part of it (Russian vs. Ukrainian) in Ukraine signal consistent differences in underlying shared collective beliefs about success and prestige. The preliminary analysis of free-listed items and emerging categories suggests that there are no substantial differences between the language-based groups regarding the beliefs about success and prestige that lie outside the territorial cleavage whereas substantial differences were identified within cleavage-related categories.

Keywords: free-listing, language choice, group consensus, values priorities.

Free-listing

Free-listing is a qualitative elicitation technique that has grown in popularity in recent decades. A Web of Science search including these terms returned only two articles in 1999 while the cumulative number of articles using free-listing had risen considerably reaching the 361 mark by 2019 (Keddem, Barg, & Frasso, 2021). It is a simple and useful tool suitable for exploring how groups of individuals think about a cultural domain and define its focal features (D'Andrade, 1995; Quinlan, 2017). This technique is also well-adapted for identifying shared similarities and collective priorities which makes it an invaluable tool for ethnographers and students of culture working in the field with limited time resources and budget constraints (Dengah et al., 2021; Maltseva, 2016). Invented by anthropologists, free-listing is usually introduced at the beginning of the project and can be administered equally well in one-on-one qualitative interviews and to several individuals simultaneously (Dengah et al., 2021).

To free-list, a researcher typically starts by asking participants to name all the items that come to mind in response to a stimulus ("What flavors of ice-cream are there?" or "What cures for headaches

do you know?", etc.). Items are sorted and ranked by the researcher on the basis of frequency or salience, a measure indicating the importance of an item to the respondents. The strength of this method is that it elicits spontaneous responses that can be collected early in the project development and that it requires minimal familiarity of the researcher with the cultural community to achieve elicitation of emic (obtained from within and defined by the social group under study) data. The results of free-listing can be quantified and incorporated into mixed-methods studies. For instance, Maltseva (2016) studied the Swedish cultural model of "good and worthy life" (p. 82) and used free-listing for initial data-collection of emic categories that informants use to describe their understanding of the model. Then the presence of each response to each stimulus was calculated and the most frequent of them served as the basis for quantitative interviewing using the scales instrument. In other words, free-listing enabled the scholar to identify the elements of the cultural model. In contrast, the quantitative phase allowed measuring the homogeneity of the model, defining which elements are central and which are peripheral as well as concluding about individual compliance with the model. Similarly, Martinez Tyson et al. (2011) studied the cultural models of

depression among immigrants using free-listing first at the beginning and then utilizing the data obtained to carry out factor analysis to find out the differences in cultural models of depression among immigrants representing different ethnicities: Puerto Rican, Mexican, Colombian, Cuban.

The present study uses the methodological advantages of free-listing to extract meaningful categories that can be further used to develop scales and generate more complex quantitative measures in the domain of language-based cultural models.

The language choice in Ukraine: sociopolitical background

Language choice in Ukraine has been a topic of interest for political science, history, sociology, sociolinguistics and other related areas because it can serve as an indicator for many social, political views of an individual.

Studies of the postcolonialist past of Ukraine consider the language situation in Ukraine as a consequence of belonging to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. As a consequence, even though Russian language does not have an official status in Ukraine, it was dominant for a long time during the independence of Ukraine in music, sports and commercial sphere (Masenko, 2004). On a larger scale, Ukrainians are much more likely to recognize Ukrainian as their mother tongue than speak it at home. 76 % of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian their mother tongue, but only 45 % speak only Ukrainian at home (Rating Group, 2022, March 19). Such tendencies, according to a postcolonial perspective, are a proof of cultural dominance of Russia and Russian language in Ukraine which is a heritage of Ukraine being occupied by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. When it comes to regional diversity, historical and postcolonial lenses of analysis show that the more a region of Ukraine was under Russian control, the more individuals in these regions speak Russian instead of Ukrainian. For instance, 87 % of the inhabitants of the West of Ukraine speak only Ukrainian at home, whereas for the Center of Ukraine this percentage is 52, in the South – 20% and only 8 % in the East of Ukraine. At the same time, it should be noted that there is a significant percentage of bilinguals in the Center, South and East: 36 %, 46 and 47 %, respectively (Rating Group, 2022, March 19). It should be noted that the impact of the postcolonial past has been decreasing dramatically since the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014) and the subsequent Russian military aggression in Crimea and Donbas. For instance, in

2011 44 % of Ukrainians spoke only Ukrainian at home, 15 % used both Ukrainian and Russian and 40 % spoke only Russian (ibid). In contrast, in 2021, 45 % of Ukrainians spoke only Ukrainian, but the number of bilinguals at home increased to 26 % because the number of those who speak only Russian decreased to 18 % (ibid). Such a shift can be explained by the introduction of a more suitable legal framework for the development of Ukrainian language through legal regulation of TV and radio (Law of Ukraine on implementing changes to some of the laws of Ukraine regarding the language of audiovisual (digital) media, 2017), education (Law of Ukraine on Education, 2017) and, in general, through providing for the status of Ukrainian as the only official language in public sphere (Law of Ukraine on the provision of functioning of Ukrainian as the official language, 2019). Even though the impact of postcolonialism has decreased, this analytical lense is still useful since the orientation on Russia and Russian culture still informs language choice, cultural consumption and political orientations of a significant number of Ukrainians.

Regarding the political orientations, studies of electoral behaviour suggest that language constitutes an integral part of a territorial political cleavage in Ukraine (along with region of living and religion) and thus determines the probability of voting for either pro-Russian or pro-European political parties (Birch, 2000; Katchanovski, 2006; Kuchynskyyi, 2020). In this regard, language serves as an indicator of a system of political, cultural and identity beliefs of Ukrainians. Moreover, these beliefs have a regional, geographic mapping since individuals who live in the West of Ukraine are more likely to speak Ukrainian, more likely to have a positive attitude towards the integration of Ukraine to the EU and NATO and a negative attitude towards Russia. Conversely, people in the South-East of Ukraine are more likely to speak Russian, more skeptical of the EU and NATO integration and have a rather positive attitude towards Russia.

Research problem

While historical causes of postcolonial heritage and language choice as a part of territorial political cleavage are important in explaining the causes and effects of language choice in Ukraine, these analytical lenses do not explain whether the explanatory power of language can go further. They do not explain whether language choice can signal the differences in perceptions of individuals of what constitutes individual and life success as well as social prestige. In other words, for Ukrainian context

it has not been studied whether the spoken language can indicate/mark systematic, meaningful differences in group beliefs in some cultural domains, for instance, on what is a socially approved and respected mode of individual life (e.g. the Ukrainian cultural model of success) and what are some of the signs of this mode that do not necessarily belong to an individual (e.g. the Ukrainian cultural model of prestige). Therefore, the research question guiding this study is: *does language choice, as a part of territorial cleavage, indicate differences in cultural beliefs about success and prestige?*

Why might such an association be in place? The answer lies in the role of political parties and particular politicians in proposing and imposing a particular normative model of what constitutes a socially approved and respected way of life (success), and what are socially respectable items in different spheres of life (prestige). Political parties for which people vote on the opposite sides of the territorial cleavage in Ukraine (pro-European on the one side and pro-Russian on the other) propose not only different visions of Ukraine as political entity and society, but also, to some extent, present what constitute a socially approved and respected individual and what are socially approved practices. This happens because, according to Bader (2014), one of the main functions of political parties is to gather from the electorate and articulate the version of a “common good” should be in conformity with the “individual good”, at least from the normative standpoint (Argandoña, 1998). These visions are represented in manifestos of political parties and in other types of political communication. This way, individuals match their own understanding of common and individual good with that of political parties or a particular politician. Therefore, if people speaking different languages vote differently, they might also have different cultural models regarding prestige and success.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I present the main theoretical and methodological approaches which inform this study: grounded theory and cultural models approach.

Grounded theory emphasizes the iterative and inductive approach to conducting research (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007). In other words, empirical data is created first, then on the basis of results a theoretical approach that can explain the results is chosen. However, the choice of theory is tentative since after the next stages of data gathering, it might be the case that another theory would be the most relevant. Before the first stage of data-gathering,

several theories that might potentially explain the phenomenon are considered by a scholar, but none of those informs the concepts and categorization for the first empirical stage (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007). Grounded theory is important for this study since it was important not to impose any concepts and definitions to terms to the informants so that they could freely list the emic categories they have in mind about prestige and success.

Cultural models is an approach in anthropology which allows measuring shared cultural knowledge of groups regarding certain phenomena. Cultural models are understood as ‘a set of ideas and practices that are transmitted as a result of cultural transmission and are closely embedded in the daily life of the individual as one of the key prerequisites for his social interaction’ (Bouchelnikova, Olenchenko, & Maltseva, 2016, p. 58). In the context of this study, during the free-listing, categories and items of shared cultural knowledge of language groups will be elicited which will then allow measuring the homogeneity of a model and individual compliance with its key elements.

Both approaches are interconnected here since cultural models approach is focused on eliciting intra-group cognitive understanding of a certain phenomenon or social practice. Therefore, firstly, before the data is elicited, it can be concluded which of the theories can explain the results most sufficiently. Secondly, no specific theory should inform and impose certain conceptualizations of the phenomena of interest which is the fundamental presupposition of the grounded theory. The use of both approaches allows eliciting intra-group emic data about understanding of certain social practices by social groups.

Conceptualizations

In this section the definitions of the key concepts in this study are outlined: language choice, success and prestige.

Language choice is the language with which an individual identifies oneself, language of preference.

Success is achieving a certain desired individual outcome such as a desired position in a social hierarchy (Malcomson, 2013). This basic definition by Malcomson uncovers the issue that the concept of success has at least two important approaches to it. The first one considers success as reflecting the place of an individual in a social hierarchy. In this regard, being a top-manager in a corporation is considered a sign of success, but being a worker in McDonald’s is not. The second approach to conceptualizing success is rather concerned with the

subjective satisfaction of an individual in one's life. Both these approaches are equally relevant and might be taken into account by a single individual. In order to reconcile the two approaches, Parker and Chushmir (1992) proposed a set of dimensions of life success: status/wealth, personal fulfillment, professional fulfillment, security, family relationship and contribution to society. In this regard, personal and professional fulfillment are rather related to subjective satisfaction of an individual whereas the rest of dimensions are more related to the objective state of affairs in those areas. Therefore, **success** is a term which denotes both the level of achievement of an individual in different areas of life and the level of subjective satisfaction with these achievements.

Prestige is a category which is different from success since it does not denote the level of achievements of an individual or one's own satisfaction and life-fulfillment. In other words, it is common to say "this is a successful person", but uncommon to say "this is a prestigious person". Prestige is a marker that certain social phenomena such as organizations, brands, educational institutions, professions have social respect, trust and authority. For instance, Billédi (1989, p. 328) defines prestige as "the respect of someone's knowledge, expertise or possession of specially valued talents" in the context of occupational prestige. Other scholars studied linguistic prestige (social prestige of a language) (O'Donnell, 1988), brand prestige (Tuškej & Podnar, 2018), higher education prestige (Feng, 2022). Prestige is related to success since it can signify that an individual is successful, that an individual possesses certain prestigious belongings or has certain personal qualities that are socially respectable. However, prestige does not answer the question what individual goals of a person are and to what extent an individual is satisfied with their achievement. Therefore, it is necessary for this study to elicit data both about the indicators of success of an individual and about social institutions, cultural representations and practices that are worthy of respect (prestigious), but are not necessarily related to the achievement of one's individual goals. Both these concepts are related to the interconnection between individual and common good which political parties present to their electorate, so it is important to elicit the differences in the cultural models of prestige and success among language groups that have different electoral behaviour.

While it is absolutely necessary to outline the scholarly definitions of the most important concepts used in this study, it must be underlined that none of these definitions were shared to the informants since

it was important to elicit their own understanding of the concept through its indicators.

Methods

Participants and procedures

To ensure a sufficient amount of culturally-competent informants to be interviewed on the subject, the sample for free-listing consisted of educated individuals employed chiefly in academia, or being political or civic activists. Due to pandemic conditions in Kyiv, the convenience sampling method via the Internet (social media sites) was used. The total sample size (N = 1253) exceeds the numbers necessary for the effective free-listing data analysis enabling a more elaborate qualitative work to be done with those responses that were lengthy and contained many lexemes. It is typically advised to administer free-listing to around 20 informants (Weller, 2007). After that, data saturation may occur. However, if the total number is bigger than 20, this does not constitute a methodological pitfall since the more informants there are, the richer the data, the more reliable the categories elicited during the analysis and the stronger the validity claims of the survey items created afterwards can be made.

The size of the sample divided into groups was as follows:

- Individuals who switched from Russian to Ukrainian – 316 informants;
- Individuals originating from small settlements who switched from Ukrainian to Russian after moving to a big city – 24 informants;
- Russian-speaking individuals – 299 informants;
- Ukrainian-speaking individuals – 614 informants.

The number of informants representing each group was not predetermined, so the distribution of informants belonging to each group depended on the number of volunteers in each group to participate in free-listing. The informants were supposed to fill their entries in separate Google Forms which were dedicated to each predefined language group separately. For the sake of eliciting self-identification of the informants in terms of the language choice, public vs. private spheres of linguistic usage, multiple switches, including those embracing both ways were not accounted for. Even if an individual is bilingual with different nuances (switching language at home, in the public sphere or both), it is important to find out what is their language of preference and language of self-identification. The differentiation between different domains of language choice is a useful analytical category, but for the purpose of this study, such differentiation would unnecessarily complicate the cultural models

since the number of groups will increase. All in all, since the goal was to find out what is their language of preference of language of self-identification, the use of different types of bilingualism was inappropriate here since an individual most likely has a language of preference among the two (Russian and Ukrainian), but cannot speak it on all social occasions. For instance, a Russian-speaking waiter cannot speak Russian at work, but he speaks this language in all other social settings.

A few notes should be made about the groups defined before the data gathering. The groups of Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking individuals were compulsory to include as they constitute the core of language divide in Ukraine. The group of those who switched from Ukrainian to Russian was necessary to add, in order to assess the degree of closeness their understanding of success and prestige to the group of individuals who have always been speaking Ukrainian. Finally, the group of those who have switched from Ukrainian to Russian after moving to a big city from small settlements was necessary to add since they represent the most vivid example of postcolonial heritage. Ukrainian language is the native one for these individuals and they have been speaking “surzhyk”¹ when living in their home settlements, but decided to switch to Russian supposedly in order to be socially accepted in big cities dominated by Russian language. It has to be demonstrated what the indicators of success and prestige in their estimation are and how that might be informed by their language choice.

Following the principles of grounded theory (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007), the items were split into categories on the basis of empirical data, with no specific theory informing the division.

The entire free-listing output consisted of a bigger number of statements; only results of a segment of them are presented here. All these statements are crucial to mention since the two questions presented in this paper could not be effectively considered out of context of all the other questions. *The complete set of questions included the following items:*

I regard as prestigious _____.

Indicators of success are _____.

Choice of language shows

To me, _____ would be a good example of fine culture.

Some things that come to mind when I think of expensive brands are _____.

_____ unifies Ukrainian society.

_____ disrupts Ukrainian society.

When I am talking to someone, I first and foremost pay attention to _____ during the conversation.

Some things that I think of when I think about the Revolution of Dignity are _____.

Some things that I think of when I think about the war against Russia are _____.

This set of questions was administered by means of the Google Forms functionality which provided the output in the Excel table format. The questions were formulated in Ukrainian only (which might have led to the result that even the majority of Russian-speaking respondents filled in the free-listing questionnaire in Ukrainian). The link to the Google Form was spread as a post on Facebook by the author. The two main groups participating in the questionnaire were representatives of the academia (students and postgraduate researchers) and political and civic activists. The types of sociopolitical activity of the second category include being members of political parties, working in NGOs including international ones and working as civil servants. Free-listing was anonymous with no personal data collected. The only data which did not belong to the free-listing prompts was the city informants live in. This data was important in order to understand the association between the particular answers and the region of Ukraine people live in as well as whether an individual lives in an urban or rural area. The informants were aware of the research question and goals of the study prior to participating in the study.

There were also several group-specific questions. Namely, when it comes to individuals originating from villages and small cities, the group-specific questions were:

I perceive my switch to Russian language as _____.

The main advantages of moving to a big city are _____.

The main difficulties of moving to a big city are _____.

I consider the fact of switching to Russian as _____.

I consider “surzhyk” as _____.

My adaptation in a big city is facilitated by _____.

My adaptation in a big city is hindered by _____.

Group-specific questions to individuals who switched from Russian language to Ukrainian:

I consider the fact of switching to Ukrainian as _____.

My attitude to Russian-speaking Ukrainians is _____.

¹ “Surzhyk” – a mix of Ukrainian and Russian spoken mostly in villages and small towns. There is a widely shared negative sentiment both from Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking individuals about it (Bernsand, 2001).

Group-specific questions to Russian-speaking individuals:

- I consider the fact of speaking Russian as _____.
 I consider “surzhyk” as _____.
 I consider Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians as _____.
 I do not switch to Ukrainian because _____.

Group-specific questions to Ukrainian-speaking individuals:

- I consider the fact of speaking Russian as _____.
 I consider “surzhyk” as _____.
 I consider Russian-speaking Ukrainians as _____.

Technique of analysis

After gathering the free-listing output in Excel format, the answers were analyzed regarding whether a single answer can be divided into several individual answers. The criterion was that if an informant merely lists the individual free-listing items separated by comma, then these answers can be separated. For instance, the answer “humaneness, industriousness, being well-mannered” can be separated. On the other hand, if an individual provides an extended explanation of an item, this can be neither separated, nor equalized with a shorter answer illustrating the same or similar phenomenon.

On the basis of this criterion, similar items in wording or meaning (subject to the author’s judgment) were considered as one item and the number of answers regarded as belonging to this item was counted. During the second stage, similar items (belonging to a larger theme) were united under what was conceptualized as “category” (explained in more detail below).

Definition of categories

As was outlined in the previous section, the principles of grounded theory informed the steps of the research design. Based on the descriptive analysis on data, similar answers were grouped under the broader category that unites them. For instance, for the free-listing entry “Indicators of success are” the answers “Financial well-being” and “To have my own house” are grouped under the category of “Financial prosperity”. It should be mentioned that in some borderline cases the individual output could be regarded as belonging to more than one category and the final decision depended on the subjective judgment of the author. Below are definitions of the categories.

Education – formal or informal education, mentions of the education process.

Family – mentions of the nuclear or extended family.

Language – mentions of the importance of speaking Ukrainian or mentions of the importance of speaking foreign languages (including Russian).

Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context – mentions of the political, social and cultural processes in Ukraine as an indicator of prestige/success, knowledge about Ukraine and contribution to the development of the country as virtue.

Indicators of personal development – emphasis on self-perception of a person, one’s moral virtues, skills, subjective life satisfaction. In other words, this category represents the values which do not explicitly require comparisons with other individuals and do not denote an individual’s social status.

Professional achievements – includes achievements and professional sphere in general and social status resulting from professional achievements.

Travel – mentions of travels both within the territory of Ukraine and abroad as well as presence of financial resources to travel.

Financial prosperity – explicit mentions about financial prosperity or mentions of goods for which a certain prosperity level is necessary (if these goods do not belong to another category (e.g., travel)).

Social circle – close social circle of a person (friends, acquaintances) to which neither family, nor society at large belong.

Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige as categories – includes critical assessment of the concepts above, acknowledgement of not using or not understanding them.

Results and Discussion

In this section, I will present the main results of data gathering and analysis using the free-listing technique. I outline the differences between language groups, between answers to stimulus about success on the one hand and prestige on the other. I also offer tentative explanations to the results which have to be verified in further studies.

Free-listing information and the results from the ensuing categories analysis suggest that the most marked differences between the subgroups are related to Ukraine and language categories. Russian-speaking individuals and individuals originating from small rural settlements place much less emphasis on the need to speak Ukrainian while paying more attention to being able to speak foreign languages in comparison to Ukrainian-speaking individuals. Ukrainian-speaking individuals also mention more frequently the need of knowing the

sociopolitical and cultural aspects of Ukraine and contributing to its development. Individuals who switched to Ukrainian from Russian are more concerned with the language choice and sociopolitical development of Ukraine than Russian-speaking individuals, but less concerned in comparison to individuals who have always been speaking Ukrainian. In a nutshell, there is a positive association between speaking Ukrainian and mentioning language and sociopolitical development of Ukraine as indicators of prestige.

Differences between language groups

Ukrainian-speaking individuals

As for particular items of *prestige*, self-realization, happiness and family (including certain variations of mentioning family) were the most popular. When it comes to particular items about prestige, it is crucial to mention that the statement “To speak the official language in one’s country” is the most popular by a huge handicap. Knowing the context of this study, Ukrainian-speaking informants likely chose to use

their participation in the study as a manifestation of their identity and political stances. On the level of categories, language and Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context are almost the most popular category together, getting close to the indicators of personal development. When it comes to foreign languages, Ukrainian-speaking individuals also recognized the prestige of learning them, but the emphasis on speaking and learning Ukrainian is significantly stronger (Tables 1–2).

Russian-speaking informants

Among some minor differences regarding the indicators of *success* was a slightly greater emphasis of Russian-speaking individuals on financial prosperity (15 % in comparison to 10 % among the Ukrainian-speaking) and on success and achievements (22 % versus 18 %). In addition, in the list of particular items, it is worth noting that financial prosperity is the most popular one. However, part of the reason is that Russian-speaking individuals were more uniform in choosing a concept for financial prosperity whereas Ukrainian-speaking individuals used several different

Table 1. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of prestige for the Ukrainian-speaking individuals

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 108 | 22 |
| Family | 11 | 1 |
| Language | 188 | 21 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 90 | 10 |
| Indicators of personal development | 300 | 33 |
| Professional achievements | 117 | 13 |
| Travel | 19 | 2 |
| Financial prosperity | 43 | 5 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 17 | 2 |
| Social circle | 6 | 1 |
| Total | 899 | 100 |

Table 2. Most frequent free-listing items denoting indicators of prestige for the Ukrainian-speaking individuals

| I regard as prestigious | Number |
|---|--------|
| To speak the official language of one’s own country | 60 |
| To be erudite | 35 |
| Good education | 27 |
| To be oneself | 23 |
| To be intelligent | 17 |
| To speak several languages | 14 |
| Education | 11 |
| To speak fluent Ukrainian | 8 |
| To be Ukrainian | 8 |
| Travels | 7 |
| Income | 7 |
| To be well-mannered | 6 |
| Higher education | 6 |
| To have a good personality | 5 |
| To speak foreign languages | 5 |

concepts, some of which conceptualize financial prosperity in a slightly veiled manner.

Among the Russian-speaking group items constituting *prestige*, the answer about education in its different modifications was the most popular (Table 4). Also, Russian-speaking individuals frequently mentioned the importance of speaking foreign languages, which was much more popular than statements about speaking Ukrainian. As for the categories (Table 3), Russian-speaking individuals placed much less emphasis on language and Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context, but a much greater emphasis on education.

Within the sample of Russian-speaking individuals, the negative attitude towards Ukrainian language and its role for Ukrainian statehood is quite rare to the extent that mentions emphasizing the need to speak Ukrainian and learning it are much more frequent than the negative attitude to this language. In contrast to Ukrainian-speaking individuals who strongly support current language regulations in such spheres as civil service, state institutions, television and radio broadcasting, education and services in private enterprises such as cafes and restaurants, Russian-speaking individuals are more ambivalent regarding these policies. Some of the informants mentioned that these policies constitute “violent ukrainization”, discrimination

and violation of human rights. In general, Russian-speaking individuals would like language use to be much less regulated by the state which would expand their freedom of choice in various social situations.

Individuals who switched from Russian to Ukrainian

Individuals who switched from Russian to Ukrainian had good education, speaking Ukrainian, intelligence, speaking many languages, and competence as the core items of prestige (Table 5). The distribution of categories is quite similar to the Ukrainian-speaking individuals, but for the fact that individuals who switched to Ukrainian were less radical in their statements about language and Ukraine and mentioned these categories slightly less frequently than individuals who have been speaking Ukrainian all the time. Among particular items, quality education is the most popular by a huge margin (Table 6).

Individuals originating from small settlements who switched from Ukrainian to Russian

When it comes to the success indicators, individuals identified family as the primary indicator of *success*, followed by the ability to assist one’s family financially, self-realization, internal harmony

Table 3. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of prestige for the Russian-speaking individuals

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 84 | 20 |
| Family | 2 | 0 |
| Language | 61 | 14 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 11 | 3 |
| Indicators of personal development | 123 | 29 |
| Professional achievements | 81 | 19 |
| Travel | 9 | 2 |
| Financial prosperity | 32 | 8 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 15 | 4 |
| Social circle | 5 | 1 |
| Total | 423 | 100 |

Table 4. Most frequent free-listing items denoting indicators of prestige for the Russian-speaking individuals

| I regard as prestigious | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|
| To have good education | 31 |
| Intelligence | 12 |
| To speak several languages | 11 |
| Education | 10 |
| To be erudite | 8 |
| Professionalism | 7 |
| Knowledge of languages | 5 |
| To be yourself | 5 |
| To speak fluent Ukrainian | 5 |
| To be a civilized person | 5 |

Table 5. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of prestige for individuals who switched to Ukrainian

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 63 | 15 |
| Family | 2 | 0 |
| Language | 73 | 17 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 47 | 11 |
| Indicators of personal development | 125 | 29 |
| Professional achievements | 81 | 19 |
| Travel | 4 | 1 |
| Financial prosperity | 24 | 6 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 11 | 3 |
| Social circle | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 434 | 100 |

Table 6. Most frequent free-listing items denoting indicators of prestige for individuals who switched to Ukrainian

| I regard as prestigious | Number |
|--|--------|
| To have good education | 29 |
| To speak Ukrainian | 17 |
| Intelligence | 13 |
| To speak many languages | 12 |
| Professionalism | 12 |
| To speak several languages | 8 |
| Do not use prestige as a unit of measurement | 7 |
| Education | 7 |
| Erudition | 7 |
| To earn well | 6 |

and financial prosperity. Similarly to Russian-speaking individuals, this category did not place a significant emphasis on speaking Ukrainian or on Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context. However, all conclusions related to this group are vastly preliminary due to a much smaller sample size in comparison to other groups. Also, percentages pertaining to particular categories significantly differ from the other groups primarily due to the sample size.

Individuals originating from small settlements who switched from Ukrainian to Russian after moving to a big city had education, happiness, competence and a job they loved as the most popular items of prestige.

Differences between categories

Across all groups and both free-listing stimulus statements, indicators of personal development proved to be the most popular category both for prestige and success. In a nutshell, it means that the free-listing sample is more oriented towards subjective life-satisfaction and fulfillment. For instance, among the answers in this category, the most popular ones are self-realization, happiness and life-satisfaction.

It is worth noting that financial prosperity is not a leading category in any of the groups, neither

when it comes to the indicators of success, nor when it comes to the indicators of prestige. For both success and prestige, financial prosperity was listed much less frequently than indicators of personal development and professional achievements. When it comes to prestige for Ukrainian-speaking individuals and those who switched to Ukrainian, financial prosperity was mentioned less frequently than Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural contexts and less than Ukrainian language. Also, financial prosperity was a less popular indicator of prestige than education. However, it can be hypothesized that this category is implicitly present in such variables as travel and success which might mean that financial prosperity is important to the informants, but they are reluctant to point out this factor as a stand-alone one, opting rather to include this component into a more overarching factor such as professional achievements which is more socially acceptable to point out or to choose more covert concepts to signal financial prosperity which is clearly the case for Ukrainian-speaking individuals.

Differences between answers to stimuli about prestige and success

There have been different patterns of response when it comes to the statements “I regard as

prestigious” and “Indicators of life success are”. For instance, the first statement resonated more with the categories related to language and Ukraine in sociopolitical context and was much more frequently present in the responses. However, one could hardly regard contributing to the success of Ukraine or knowing certain languages or choosing a particular language over the other as central to one’s life success. In particular, even when it comes to Ukrainian-speaking individuals, answers related to language and Ukraine amount to 31 % of answers in the statement “I regard as prestigious”, but only to 2 % in the statement “Indicators of life success are”. This tendency is identical across all language groups (Tables 7–10). The reason most

probably lies in the conceptualizations of prestige and success. While success indicates the achievement by an individual of his goals, prestige as a concept is not that centered on an individual. Instead, it denotes social practices, cultural representations or material belongings that are socially approved and respected, but they do not necessarily serve as an indicator of success for an individual. The same pattern is present when it comes to education. In the statement “I regard as prestigious”, education is mentioned between 7 and 20 % of answers depending on a group. At the same time, in the statement “Indicators of life success are”, education is mentioned only in 2–3 % of answers.

Table 7. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of success for the Ukrainian-speaking individuals

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 24 | 2 |
| Family | 138 | 12 |
| Language | 2 | 0 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 18 | 2 |
| Indicators of personal development | 455 | 41 |
| Professional achievements | 198 | 18 |
| Travel | 21 | 2 |
| Financial prosperity | 113 | 10 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 13 | 3 |
| Social circle | 113 | 10 |
| Total | 1113 | 100 |

Table 8. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of success for individuals who switched from Russian to Ukrainian

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 11 | 2 |
| Family | 54 | 11 |
| Language | 2 | 0 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 16 | 3 |
| Indicators of personal development | 205 | 42 |
| Professional achievements | 108 | 22 |
| Travel | 8 | 2 |
| Financial prosperity | 53 | 11 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 3 | 1 |
| Social circle | 27 | 6 |
| Total | 488 | 100 |

Table 9. Distribution of mentioning of free-listing categories denoting indicators of success for the Russian-speaking individuals

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 9 | 2 |
| Family | 61 | 12 |
| Language | 1 | 0 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 2 | 0 |
| Indicators of personal development | 225 | 43 |
| Professional achievements | 115 | 22 |
| Travel | 14 | 3 |
| Financial prosperity | 79 | 15 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 1 | 0 |
| Social circle | 14 | 3 |
| Total | 521 | 100 |

Table 10. Distribution of mentioning free-listing categories denoting indicators of prestige from informants originating from small settlements

| Category | Absolute number | Percentage as integer, % |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Education | 2 | 7 |
| Family | 1 | 3 |
| Language | 4 | 14 |
| Ukraine in sociopolitical and cultural context | 1 | 3 |
| Indicators of personal development | 14 | 48 |
| Professional achievements | 4 | 14 |
| Travel | 1 | 3 |
| Financial prosperity | 2 | 7 |
| Rejections/lack of understanding of success or prestige | 0 | 0 |
| Social circle | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 29 | 100 |

The opposite tendency is present when it comes to the category of the family: it is mentioned only from 0 to 3 % in the question about prestige and from 11 to 20 % in the question about life success. In comparison to success, prestige is much more often perceived as consisting of a set of material items rather than a set of social connections which further explains why family is not considered an item of prestige.

Conclusions

The results of the present study illustrate the practical utility of the free-listing procedure for the initial stages of a research project when a scholar needs to gather the empirical data on a new subject while minimizing his or her influence on the study participants. A resulting set of responses to the free-listing stimuli provides a sufficient amount of meaningful, interpretable and quantifiable data regarding the categories and lexemes that are central to the informants' ways of thinking, attitudes to particular phenomena, as well as their social behaviours, beliefs, values, etc. In this regard, free-listing is a cost-effective research technique yielding good qualitative data quickly. Potentially, free-listing can also facilitate the process of selecting a sound theoretical framework on the basis of empirical data. Additionally, it can be used as a stepping stone to develop further metrics to advance in the project in quantitative or mixed methods research designs. For the next stage of the author's project the knowledge of wording individuals used to express certain phenomena and most frequent dispositions among them would allow formulating items for a multi-item scale and develop a survey instrument.

As for the research problem per se, in the present study using free-listing it was also found out that the main differences in cultural notions of success and prestige (that might underlie the corresponding

cultural models) between the groups of informants by language lay in the domain of importance of Ukrainian language and Ukraine in sociopolitical context. At the same time, this difference is visible only when it comes to the question of prestige, not about success. Except for these two categories of success prestige, there are no major differences in groupings of items of success and prestige between different groups of informants by language.

These preliminary results will be instrumental in formulating the future questions for a quantitative survey to test these findings more in-depth with a more diverse and representative sample which would then allow drawing conclusions about the association between language choice and cultural models of success and prestige, based on the results of factor analysis and multiple correspondence analysis.

Limitations

Since the results of this free-listing are preliminary, it is necessary to draw attention to the limitations of this study and to the reason why exactly the results are preliminary. First of all, the free-listing results cannot serve as a stand-alone final result. Here the results of free-listing are used as a means to develop a set of items for a future survey. Furthermore, currently, the results are not representative of the general population according to several criteria. The sample size is smaller ($N = 1253$) than normally used for national representative surveys (around 2000). Finally, the composition of the sample does not represent the structure of the general population due to the overrepresentation of students, scholars and political activists in the free-listing sample (although it was necessary to obtain reliable information and thus was suitable for the purposes of the study). Also, on a separate note it is worth mentioning that both data collection and analysis

were performed before the full-scale military aggression of Russia against Ukraine in 2022. Therefore, the results do not take into account the

important changes that might have taken place in cultural models of Ukrainians and that are explored by the author in his current project.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ТЕХНІКИ ФРІЛІСТИНГУ ДЛЯ ВИМІРЮВАННЯ ГРУПОВОГО КОНСЕНСУСУ: КЕЙС МОВНОГО ВИБОРУ В УКРАЇНІ

Фрілістинг – це корисна якісницька техніка для вивчення того, як групи людей мислять про певний культурний домен і визначають його основні особливості. Цей інструмент також добре адаптований для виявлення спільності колективних пріоритетів, що робить фрілістинг безцінним для етнографів і дослідників культури. Винайдений антропологами, фрілістинг зазвичай проводять на початку дослідницького проекту, він однаково ефективний як під час індивідуальних якісницьких інтерв'ю, так і з кількома особами одночасно. Однією з його переваг є здатність виявляти емічні категорії в даних. Це дослідження (N = 1253), проведене в січні 2021 року, демонструє корисність

техніки фрілістингу для вивчення консенсусних переконань, що стосуються мовної культурної ідентичності у вибірці українськомовних та російськомовних українців. Процедури збору та аналізу даних за допомогою цього методу розглянуто на прикладі вивчення вибору мови в Україні та його зв'язку з ціннісним консенсусом між мовними групами та всередині них. У результаті фрілістингу було виокремлено основні категорії, що відображають груповий консенсус. Також наведено попередні висновки щодо ступеня цього консенсусу, що стане фундаментальним для формування шкального інструменту для майбутніх досліджень культурних ідентичностей на основі мов. У цьому дослідженні завдяки використанню фрілістингу з'ясовано, що основні відмінності між мовними групами полягають у сфері важливості української мови та України в суспільно-політичному контексті, оскільки українськомовні люди та ті, хто перейшов на українську, надають вищий пріоритет цим ціннісним категоріям. Показово, що різниця помітна лише тоді, коли йдеться про поняття престижу, а не успіху. Ці попередні результати матимуть важливе значення для формулювання майбутніх запитань для кількісного дослідження, щоб перевірити ці результати глибше за допомогою більш різноманітної та репрезентативної вибірки.

Ключові слова: фрілістинг, груповий консенсус, мовний вибір, ціннісні пріоритети.

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