

Language in Society (CL2.203), IIIT Hyderabad

Assignment 5

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Note: All transcriptions are in WX, in inline code format after the word. The transcription is followed by the translation in brackets, *e.g.* വാക്ക് vAkk (word).

1 Introduction

The languages under consideration will be English and Malayalam. The following conceptual spaces will be studied:

- kinship terms
- colour terms
- body parts

2 Kinship Terms

We will distinguish three types of relation according to generation (one or more generations lower, same generation, one or more generations higher); and two types according as whether or not it is a relation by marriage.

2.1 English

English has a simple system for describing family relations.

- **One or more generations lower.** The blood relations are:
 - *son, daughter*
 - *(great-)grandson, (great-)granddaughter*
 - *niece, nephew* (child of any relative in the same generation)
 - *(great-)grandniece, (great-)grandnephew*

There are also the umbrella terms *child* and *grandchild*. The umbrella term for *niece* and *nephew* is simply *nephew*.

The corresponding relations by marriage are:

- *son-in-law, daughter-in-law*
- *niece by marriage, nephew by marriage*

Umbrella terms do not exist for these relations.

- **Same generation.** The blood relations are:

- *brother, sister*
- *(first, second, ...) cousin*

Gender is not distinguished by *cousin*, except in Indian English (*cousin-brother* and *cousin-sister*). The umbrella term for *brother* and *sister* is *sibling*.

The corresponding relations by marriage are:

- *brother-in-law, sister-in-law*
- *co-brother, co-sister* (Indian English)
- *cousin by marriage*

Umbrella terms do not exist for the first two sets of terms. A *co-brother* (*co-sister*) is a man (woman) whose wife (husband) is one's spouse's sister (brother).

Note that the child or parent of a (n^{th}) cousin by marriage is called a (n^{th}) *cousin once removed*; similarly, a grandparent or grandchild is a (n^{th}) cousin twice removed, and so on.

- **One or more generations higher.** The blood relations are:

- *mother, father*
- *grandmother, grandfather*
- *aunt, uncle*
- *grandaunt, granduncle*

The umbrella terms *parent* and *grandparent* cover the first two sets. The terms *aunt* and *uncle* refer to any relative of the same generation as one's parents (who is not one's parent). *Grandaunt* and *granduncle* are analogous.

The relations by marriage are:

- *mother-in-law, father-in-law*
- *aunt by marriage, uncle by marriage*

2.2 Malayalam

Malayalam's kinship system is slightly more detailed than English's in most cases.

- **One or more generations lower.** The blood relations are:

- മകൻ *makeṇ* (son), മകൾ *makeḷ* (daughter)
- കൊച്ചുമകൻ *koccamakeṇ* (grandson), കൊച്ചുമകൾ *koccamakeḷ* (granddaughter)
- മരുമകൻ *marumakeṇ* (nephew), മരുമകൾ *marumakeḷ* (niece)

The umbrella terms for the first two groups are കുട്ടി kutti (child) and കൊച്ചുകുട്ടി koccukutti (grandchild; alternatively, പേരക്കുട്ടി perakkutti).

The terms for relations by marriage are:

- മരുമകൻ marumakan (son-in-law), മരുമകൾ marumakaly (daughter-in-law)

Note that these are identical to the terms for nephew and niece.

• **Same generation.** The blood relations are:

- ആങ്ങള Affalya (brother, where ego is female), പെങ്ങള peVffalya (sister, where ego is male)
- ചേട്ടൻ cettan (elder brother), ചേച്ചി/ചേട്ടത്തി cecci/cettawwi (elder sister)
- അനിയൻ aniyann (younger brother), അനിയത്തി aniyawwi (younger sister)

There are, again, no umbrella terms, and no terms which are neutral to *both* age and the gender of ego.

The relations by marriage are:

- അളിയൻ alYiyan (brother-in-law)
- നാത്തൂൻ nAwwUn (husband's sister)
- എടത്തിയമ്മ etawwiyamma (brother's wife)

Notably, there is only one term for brother-in-law, but two for sister-in-law.

• **One or more generations higher.** The blood relations are:

- അമ്മ amma (mother), അച്ഛൻ acCan (father)
- വലിയമ്മ valiyamma (either parent's elder sister/cousin)
- വലിയച്ഛൻ valiyacCan (either parent's elder brother/cousin)
- ചെറിയമ്മ cerYiyamma (either parent's younger sister/cousin)
- ചെറിയച്ഛൻ cerYiyacCan (either parent's younger brother/cousin)
- അമ്മാവൻ/മാമൻ ammAvan/mAman (mother's brother)
- മുത്തശ്ശൻ muwwaSSan (maternal (great-)grandfather), മുത്തശ്ശി muwwaSSi (maternal (great-)grandmother)
- അമ്മമ്മ ammamma (maternal grandmother)
- അച്ഛമ്മ acCamma (paternal grandmother), അച്ഛച്ഛൻ acCacCan (paternal grandfather)
- അപ്പൂപ്പൻ appUppan (grandfather)

There is no umbrella term corresponding to **parent** or **grandparent**.

The relations by marriage have the following terms:

- അമ്മായിയമ്മ ammAiyiyamma (mother-in-law), അമ്മായിയച്ഛൻ ammAiyiyacCan (father-in-law)
- വലിയമ്മ valiyamma (either parent's elder brother's/cousin's wife)

- വലിയച്ഛൻ valiyacCan (either parent’s elder sister’s/cousin’s husband)
- ചെറിയമ്മ cerYiyamma (either parent’s younger brother’s/cousin’s wife)
- ചെറിയച്ഛൻ cerYiyacCan (either parent’s younger sister’s/cousin’s husband)
- അമ്മായി ammAyi (aunt by marriage)

The presence of a specific term for only aunts by marriage is surprising, as there is no such for the male counterpart.

3 Colour Terms

3.1 English

English has a very wide range of colour terms. The spectrum is divided mainly into 7 colours (*violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red*), but there are several other colours, like *black, white, grey, beige, maroon, brown, purple, cyan, crimson, scarlet, mauve, lavender*, etc.

These can be qualified by *light* or *dark*.

The boundaries between many of these are poorly defined, and it is not always clear which is which, however.

3.2 Malayalam

Malayalam has a simple colour range with a few native colour terms and some more English words in common use.

The native Malayalam colour words include:

- ചുവപ്പ്/ചുമപ്പ് cuvapp/cumapp (red)
- കറുപ്പ് karYupp (black)
- വെളുപ്പ് velYupp (white)
- നീല nIla (blue)
- പച്ച pacca (green)
- മഞ്ഞ maFFa (yellow)
- തവിട്ട് wavitt (brown)

In addition to these, ഓറഞ്ച് oranc (orange), പർപ്പിൾ parppilY (purple), etc. are commonly used as loanwords.

Any of these words can be qualified by ഇളം ilYam (light) or കടും kaduM (dark).

Note: the first three colour terms in the above list are *nouns* – redness, blackness, and whiteness. The corresponding adjectives are in fact verbal formations; the verbs ചുവക്കുക cuvakkuka (to turn red), കറുക്കുക karYukkuka (to turn black) and വെളുക്കുക velYukkuka (to turn white) are the infinitives, from which are

formed ചുവന്ന *cuvanna* (red = having turned red), കറുത്ത *karYuwwa* (black = having turned black) and വെളുത്ത *velYuwwa* (white = having turned white).

The remaining four colour terms are adjectives, but it is more common to use the formation *X* നിറമുള്ള *X nirYamulYlYa* (having the colour *X*), *e.g.* പച്ചനിറമുള്ള *paccanirYamulYlYa* (green = having the colour green).

4 Body Parts

4.1 English

English has a fairly complete system for naming the parts of the body. Some terms for body parts in English are:

- *head, face, eye, mouth, nose, tongue, ear*
- *arm, hand, shoulder, elbow*
- *leg, foot, thigh, calf, knee*
- *chest, stomach*

4.2 Malayalam

The Malayalam words for body parts do not make some of the distinctions made by the English terms. They are:

- തല *wala* (head), കണ്ണ് *kaNN* (eye), വായ *vAya* (mouth), മൂക്കൻ *mUkk* (nose), നാവ് *nAv* (tongue), ചെവി *ceVvi* (ear)
- കൈ *kai* (arm/hand), തോൾ *wolY* (shoulder), മുട്ട *mutt* (elbow)
- കാൽ *kAl* (leg/foot), മുട്ട *mutt* (knee)
- മാറ് *mArY* (chest), വയറ് *vayarY* (stomach)

Note specifically the conflation of “hand”/“arm”, “foot”/“leg”, and “elbow”/“knee”.