Kinship: M=MZ

Some languages display a certain kind of polysemy pattern in which the kinship term used for referring to an anchor’s mother (M) is also used for referring to a mother’s sister (MZ). Usually, that is done by adding a modifying ‘big’ for a maternal aunt that is older than the anchor’s mother, and ‘little’ for a maternal aunt that is younger. This pattern occurs in Nuristani Waigali, as can be seen in ‎(1).

1. Waigali [wbk] (Nuristani)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| a. | jej | ‘mother’ (WBK-KinSR:002) |
| b. | dyɕtyː jej | ‘mother’s older sister’ [lit. big mother] (WBK-KinSR:031) |
| c. | kynɕtyː jej | ‘mother’s younger sister’ [lit. little mother] (WBK-KinSR:032) |

The feature occurs in a minority of the sample languages but it has a distinctly subareal distribution. It occurs, on the one hand in Eastern Nuristan, and on the other, in Eastern Karakoram. This polysemy is in some of those languages in addition to a general term for a maternal aunt, lexically distinct from the term for ‘mother’. In other cases, the polysemy also extends to the anchor’s father’s sister.

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| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 13 | 22 |
| Absent | 44 | 75 |
| Indeterminate | 2 | 3 |