

# A UNIVERSAL KINSHIP LANGUAGE<sup>1</sup>

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The sole objective of this paper is to present and exemplify what purports to be a universal kinship language. Let the language in question unfold in orientation to a generalized formula.

$$a = P^v E S [A K R I T] P^\sigma E S (b)$$

- (1) a, b, c, .....x, y, z are kin variables.
- (2)  $P^v$  and  $P^\sigma$  represent previous generations, the present generation, or future generations, i.e.

$$v, \sigma = \dots\dots\dots, -3, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3, \dots\dots\dots$$

- (3) E symbolizes the predicate “dead”.
- (4) S stands for sex: either male (M) or female (F).
- (5) Where age is a relevant factor to kinship terminology, it is represented by A.

$$\begin{array}{lll} A & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a person older or younger than”} \\ O & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a person older than”} \\ Y & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a person younger than”} \end{array}$$

- (6) Clan membership is symbolized by K.

$$K = \text{df} \quad \text{“a clansperson of”}$$

- (7) R stands for relation such that

$$\begin{array}{lll} R & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a relative of”} \\ R & = & B, B^* \\ B & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a blood relative of”} \\ B^* & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a non-blood relative of”} \\ B & = & D, D^* \\ D & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a direct blood relative of”} \\ D^* & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a non-direct blood relative of”} \\ D & = & G, C \\ G & = & \text{df} \quad \text{“a genitor of”} \end{array}$$

$$C = \text{df} \quad \text{“a genetic product of”}$$

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$B^*$	=	L, N, $R^0$
L	=	df "an affine of"
N	=	df "a person divorced from"
$R^0$	=	df "a quasi-relative of"

(8) A testator (W) and the heir (H) constitute the relation of inheritance.

I	=	W, H
I	=	df "a testator or heir of"
W	=	df "a testator of"
H	=	df "a heir of"

(9) Where taboo is relevant, T = df "a person tabooed to"

(10) If  $\Omega$  is a kinship operator, it can be modified to reflect

- (a) full co-sharing:  $\Omega$
- (b) partial co-sharing:  $\Omega^{1/2}$
- (c) negation:  $\Omega^*$
- (d) converseness:  $\Omega'$
- (e) quasi- being:  $\Omega^0$

In what follows, [ K F □ □ ], [ K L □ □ ], [ L L □ □ ] and [ E L □ □ ] introduce kinship formulae, kinship, Luganda and English language sentences respectively.

[E L 01] a is a **great-great –grandparent** of b.

[L L 01] a is a **jjajja nnakasatwe** of b.

[K F 01] a =  $P^{-4} S G P^0 S$  (b)

[K L 01] a is a previous fourth-generation male or female genitor of present-generation male or female b

[E L 02] a is a **great –grandparent** of b

[L L 02] a is a **jjajja nnakabilye** of b

[K F 02] a =  $P^{-3} S G P^0 S$  (b)

[E L 03] a is **grandparent** of b.

[L L 03] a is a **jjajja** of b.

[K F 03] a =  $P^{-2} S G P^0 S$  (b)

- [K L 04] a is a previous second-generation male or female genetic co-product of the male or female b who is a genitor of the present-generation male or female c .
- [E L 04] a is a **great-uncle** or - **aunt** of c .
- [L L 04] a is a **jjajja** of c .
- [E L 05] a is a **parent** of b .
- [L L 05] a is an **omuzadde** of b .
- [K F 05]  $a = P^{-1} S G P^0 S(b)$
- [E L 06] a is the **father** of b .
- [L L 06] a is the **taata** of b .
- [K F 06]  $a = P^{-1} M G P^0 S (b)$
- [E L 07] a is the **mother** of b .
- [L L 07] a is the **maama** of b .
- [K F 07]  $a = P^{-1} F G P^0 S (b)$
- [L L 08] a is a **kojja** of c .
- [K F 08]  $a = M \mathbf{C} F (b) G S (c)$
- [E L 08] a is a **maternal uncle** of c .
- [E L 09] a is an **uncle** of d .
- [K F 09]  $a = M L F (b) \mathbf{C} S (c) G S (d)$
- [L L 10] a is a **ssenga** of c .
- [K F 10]  $a = F \mathbf{C} M (b) G S (c)$
- [E L 10] a is an **aunt** of c .
- [L L 11] a is a **taata omuto** of c .
- [K F 11]  $a = M \mathbf{C} M (b) G S (c)$
- [E L 11] a is a **paternal uncle** of c .
- [L L 12] a is **maama omuto** of c .
- [K F 12]  $a = F \mathbf{C} F (b) G S (c)$
- [E L 12] a is a **maternal aunt** of c .
- [L L 13] a is a **ssezaala** of c .
- [K F 13]  $a = M G M (b) L F (c)$
- [E L 13] a is the **father-in-law** of c .
- [L L 14] c is a **mukaamwana** of a .
- [K F 14]  $c = F L M (b) \mathbf{C} M (a)$

- [E L 14] c is a **daughter-in-law** of a .
- [L L 15] a is a **nnyazaala** of c .  
 [K F 15]  $a = F G M (b) L F (c)$   
 [E L 15] a is the **mother-in-law** of c .
- [E L 16] a is an **uncle -or aunt-in-law** of d .  
 [K F 16]  $a = S C S (b) G S (c) L S (d)$
- [L L 17] a is an **omuzzukulu nnakasatwe** of b .  
 [K F 17]  $a = P^{+4} S C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 17] a is a **great-great-grandchild** of b .
- [L L 18] a is an **omuzzukulu nnakabiliye** of b .  
 [K F 18]  $a = P^{+3} S C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 18] a is a **great-grandchild** of b .
- [L L 19] a is an **omuzzukulu** of b .  
 [K F 19]  $a = P^{+2} S C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 19] a is a **grandchild** of b .
- [L L 20] a is an **omwana** of b .  
 [K F 20]  $a = P^{+1} S C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 20] a is a **child** of b .
- [L L 21] a is a **mutabani** of b .  
 [K F 21]  $a = P^{+1} M C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 21] a is a **son** of b .
- [L L 22] a is a **muwala** of b .  
 [K F 22]  $a = P^{+1} F C P^0 S (b)$   
 [E L 22] a is a **daughter** of b .
- [L L 23] a is an **omujjwa** of c .  
 [K F 23]  $a = S C F (b) C M (c)$
- [E L 24] a is a **nephew** of c .  
 [K F 24]  $a = M C S (b) C S (c)$
- [E L 25] a is a **niece** of c .  
 [K F 25]  $a = F C S (b) C S (c)$
- [L L 26] a is an **omukoddomi** of c .

- [K F 26]  $a = M L F (b) C S (c)$
- [L L 27]  $\underline{c}$  is a **mukaamwana** of  $\underline{a}$ . (cf. [L L 14])  
 [K F 27]  $c = F L M (b) C S (a)$
- [E L 28]  $\underline{a}$  is a **sibling** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 28]  $a = S \mathbf{C} S (b)$
- [L L 29]  $\underline{a}$  is a **mwannyina** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 29]  $a = S \mathbf{C} S' (b)$
- [L L 30]  $\underline{a}$  is a **muganda** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 30]  $a = S \mathbf{C} S (b)$
- [E L 31]  $\underline{a}$  is a **sister** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 31]  $a = F \mathbf{C} S (b)$
- [E L 32]  $\underline{a}$  is a **brother** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 32]  $a = M \mathbf{C} S (b)$
- [L L 33]  $\underline{a}$  is a **muggya** of  $\underline{c}$ .  
 [K F 33]  $a = F L M (b) L F (c)$
- [L L 34]  $\underline{a}$  is a **musangi** of  $\underline{d}$ .  
 [K F 34]  $a = M L F (b) \mathbf{C} F (c) L M (d)$
- [L L 35]  $\underline{a}$  is a **baaba** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 35]  $a = S [O \mathbf{C}] S (b)$
- [L L 36]  $\underline{a}$  is an **omwanawattu** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 36]  $a = S [Y \mathbf{C}] S (b)$
- [L L 37]  $\underline{a}$  is an **omubbee** of  $\underline{c}$ .  
 [K F 37]  $a = S C F (b) G S (c) \mathbf{C}^{1/2} S (a)$   
 [E L 37]  $\underline{a}$  is a **maternal half-sibling** of  $\underline{c}$ .
- [E L 38]  $\underline{a}$  is a **first cousin** of  $\underline{d}$ .  
 [K F 38]  $a = S C S (b) \mathbf{C} S (c) G S (d)$
- [E L 39]  $\underline{a}$  is a **half-sibling** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 39]  $a = S \mathbf{C}^{1/2} S (b)$

[L L 40]  $\underline{a}$  is a **kizibwe** of  $\underline{d}$  .  
 [K F 40]  $a = S C M (b) \mathbf{C} F (c) G S' (d)$

In Kiganda culture [41] – [43] hold.

[K F 41]  $a = S I (b) \longrightarrow a = S K \mathbf{S} (b)$

[L L 42]  $\underline{a}$  is a **nnamwandu** of  $\underline{b}$ .  
 [K F 42]  $a = F L E M (b)$

[K F 43]  $a = S C M (b) \mathbf{C} F (c) G S' (d) \longrightarrow a = S T S' (d)$

[E L 44]  $\underline{a}$  is a **paternal half-sibling** of  $\underline{b}$   
 [K F 44]  $a = S \mathbf{C}^{1/2} S (b) C M (c) G S (a)$   
 [L L 44]  $\underline{a}$  is a **muganda** or **mwannyina** of  $\underline{b}$  .

[E L 45]  $\underline{a}$  is a **stepchild** of  $\underline{b}$  .  
 [K F 45]  $a = S C^0 S (b) L S (c) G S (a)$

[L L 46]  $\underline{a}$  is a **mulamu** of  $\underline{c}$  .  
 [K F 46a]  $\underline{a} = F L M (b) \mathbf{C} S (c)$   
 K F 46b]  $\underline{a} = M L F (b) \mathbf{C} F (c)$

[E L 47]  $\underline{a}$  is a **brother – or sister – in – law** of  $\underline{c}$  .  
 [K F 47]  $a = S L S' (b) \mathbf{C} S (c)$

In conclusion, the formula at the beginning of this paper is noticeably the generalized kinship formula which could play a conceivable role in the development of a general theory of kinship terminology. If the formalized language enunciated here turns out to be viable, then the missing ingredient in the construction of the theory would, I postulate, be:

$$a = \Phi_1 \Sigma_1 \Phi_2 (b) \longrightarrow [b = \Phi_2 \Sigma_2 \Phi_3 (c) \longrightarrow a = \Phi_1 \Sigma_1 \Phi_3 (c) ]$$

where  $\Phi = P, E, S$  and  $\Sigma = A, K, R, I, T$  .