

## **Thai and Hindi Kinship Terms: A Socio Cultural Study of Linguistic Patterns**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper takes into account the two sets of linguistic patterns of Thai and Hindi kinships. Kinship patterns not only reflect the underlying socio-cultural patterns in a society but also help us to understand inheritance and succession laws in a society. The Thai family and relationship system refers to the relationship by blood or marriage. It is observed that the linguistic patterns are governed by “culture system” not the “nature system”. Some cultures emphasize “patrilineality”, while some cultures emphasize “matrilineality”. Thai families seem to emphasize matrilineality because in Thai families, the new couple stay in her parents’ house for a while and the son-in-law helps in household chores.

**Key words:** Kinship terms, Linguistic Patterns, Patrilineality, Matrilineality, Patriarchial System, Matrilineal and Matriarchial.

### **Introduction**

Kinship studies are important from linguistic, social, cultural and historical perspectives. Kinship patterns not only reflect the underlying socio-cultural patterns in a society but also help us to understand inheritance and succession laws in a society. The study of kinship as an aspect of social structure was initiated by the lawyers and students of comparative jurisprudence. That is why the study of kinship today is replete with legal terminology and concepts: rights, claims, obligations, patria potestas, contract, agnation, corporate, etc. Kinship studies also contribute to an understanding of the social and cultural aspects including marriage patterns, role and status of women in society, obligations and rights of members in a family, mono vs. polygamy /polyandry and patrilineal/matrilineal. Radcliffe- Brown (1952) presents kinship system as a field of rights and obligations, and of seeing it as part of the social structure.

Family and kinship were central to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century debates in anthropology about the origins and evolution of society. Henry Maine (1861), James McLennan (1865, 1886), and Johann Bachofen (1967) examined

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forms of family and marriage. Maine compared Greek, Roman, and more contemporary British and continental family law (as cited in International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family).

As cited in the International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family, L. H. Morgan, a U.S. lawyer, is considered the father of kinship studies in anthropology, who described the legal dimensions of family and kinship among the Iroquois of the state of New York, and compared their family and clan structures with those of European societies and Australian Aborigines (who have figured significantly in comparative studies of kinship) (Morgan 1870, 1877, 1963).

Linguistically, kinship terms, (of reference as well as address) reflect a lot of information regarding some of the aspects mentioned above. Morgan, from his analysis of kinship, developed a theory of evolution in which the division of labor within the family was the basis for the development of more complex forms of social organization. And one of the important contributions was to distinguish between kinship terms used to describe and classify individuals, leading to the use of kinship terms as the basis for comparisons of kinship terms as cultural systems of classification.

Wagner R. A. 2003 describes the structural relationships among kin groups with terms they believed are universal features of kinship and family viz descent, generation, gender, collaterality (or siblingship), and marital relations with the nuclear family, the lineage, and the clan as units of study.

The comparative study on kinship organization in India (1953, 1964) by Irawati Karve, reflects the perspective of social and physical anthropology as well as a diachronic aspect and significance of kinship studies. A study of Hindi kinship terms in comparison with English in a structural framework is presented by Narang (1976, 1984, 1990) presents a detailed study of Telugu kinship terms including the terms of address in Relation to the social stratification in the society. Sanit Samakkam (1976) stated that in Thai society, blood kin is more important than affinal relationship. Consanguineal relationship is more emphasized than affinal relationship. Concerning inheritance, Thai parents do not favor either sons or daughters. Amara Prasithrathsint also shows how Thai kinship terms are used as pronominal, terms of address, and parts of compound words. The terms used as pronominals and terms of address when they speak to non-kin people are limited to those signifying the kin who are on the mother's side and older than the person. This suggests an emphasis on matrilineality and seniority in Thai society.

The Thai family and relationship system refers to the relationship by blood or marriage. It is the "culture system" not the "nature system". Some cultures emphasize "patrilineality" such as China and India, while some cultures emphasize "matrilineality" such as the Hill tribes in Thailand-Karieng and Pow. Thai families will emphasize Matrilineality because in Thai families, the new

couple stay in her parents house for a while and the son-in-law helps in household chores. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter gets married, the 1<sup>st</sup> daughter moves to build the new house and the youngest one stays with their parents until they pass away, and they then look after the properties.( Prasithratsint. A. 1990).

Thai family life cycle: after getting married, it is a “Nuclear family” consisting of father, mother and daughters and sons. From this “Nuclear family”, it becomes the “Extended family” consisting of grandparents, husband and wife and grandchildren (children of the daughter and the son-in law). Hindi speaking families of northern parts of India are like Chinese families, where the daughter-in-law stays with the in- laws. Whenever the sons in a nuclear family get married, all the daughters-in-law move in. Thai inheritance patterns: all properties are divided equally for everyone. Even when the son gets a farm as his property but is staying away from home, he might sell the property to his sisters. Or the son lets go by the rights for the property and the parents give the money to them instead. In that case all or most of the fields and the farms would remain with the daughter and the undivided will be a big piece of land. Kinship follows a bilateral system in Thailand. Kinship terms and relationships are based on sex, relative age and the generation. All relationships are understood if we view them in a structural context based on family roles, Buddhist principles and Thai economic history. It should be realized that the “household” is important in the Thai context because rice production is a domestic enterprise (Foster 1984). In the traditional Thai family, particularly in the North and Northeast parts, which were focus on of most ethnographies, this system is called “Matrilineage”. This is a group of related households which trace their common descent to a group of sisters who lived from 3 to 8 generations ago, which in the past were based on female centred spirit cults (Pongsapich 1990). The key family relationships are between the parents and their daughters and sons-in-law and has persisted to the present. (Potter 1976). In a majority of the Indian kinship systems including the Hindi speakers in the UP it is the exact reversal of the situations, a patriarchal system where the sons inherit all the property and the parents and also the sons give cash/gifts to the daughters/sisters in lieu of a share in property.

### **Approaches to the Study of Kinship**

It adopts the most popular approach - the Semanticists’ approach/ Componential Analysis following Goodenough (1956), Lounsbury (1956, 1964) and Nida (1975)

Irawati Karve’s (1953) is a very comprehensive account of kinship systems in India starting with the diachronic aspect in ancient texts, and later aspects as studied in different regions of India -Northern Zone, Southern Zone, Central Zone and Eastern Zone.

### Hindi and Thai

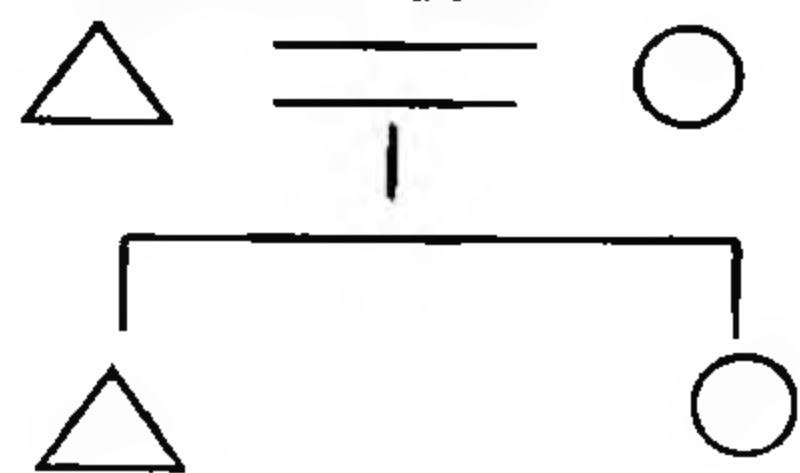
The present study is on Hindi and Thai kinship systems. Hindi belongs to the Indo -Aryan family and Thai belongs to Thai -Kadai family. One follows a patrilineal / patriarchal system while the other (Thai) matrilineal and matriarchial. Both had a joint family system earlier which is now giving way to nuclear families in urban settings.

Relations may be defined in terms a combination of features of Birth and Marriage. dominance, generation Matrilineal / Patrilineal, Relative Age (older vs. younger siblings/relations), Gender and social in terms of rights and obligations.

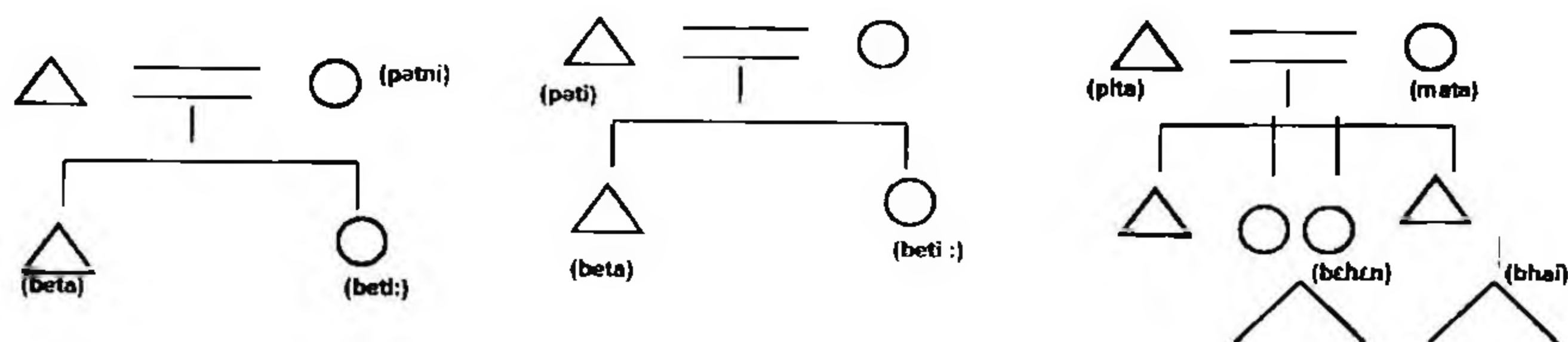
Hindi represents the Indo-Aryan system of giver and taker of 'women' (Trautman, 2000). The father/ Brother gives the girl to Man (as husband) and his family as Takers, along with all the gifts etc. The Taker's family is thus the dominant one and the Giver's family is weakened as a permanent giver, with no reciprocity.

**Parameters for comparing the Kinship Terms of Hindi and English are** Relation by Birth- Consanguine, Relation by marriage, Nuclear Family

#### Hindi and Thai –



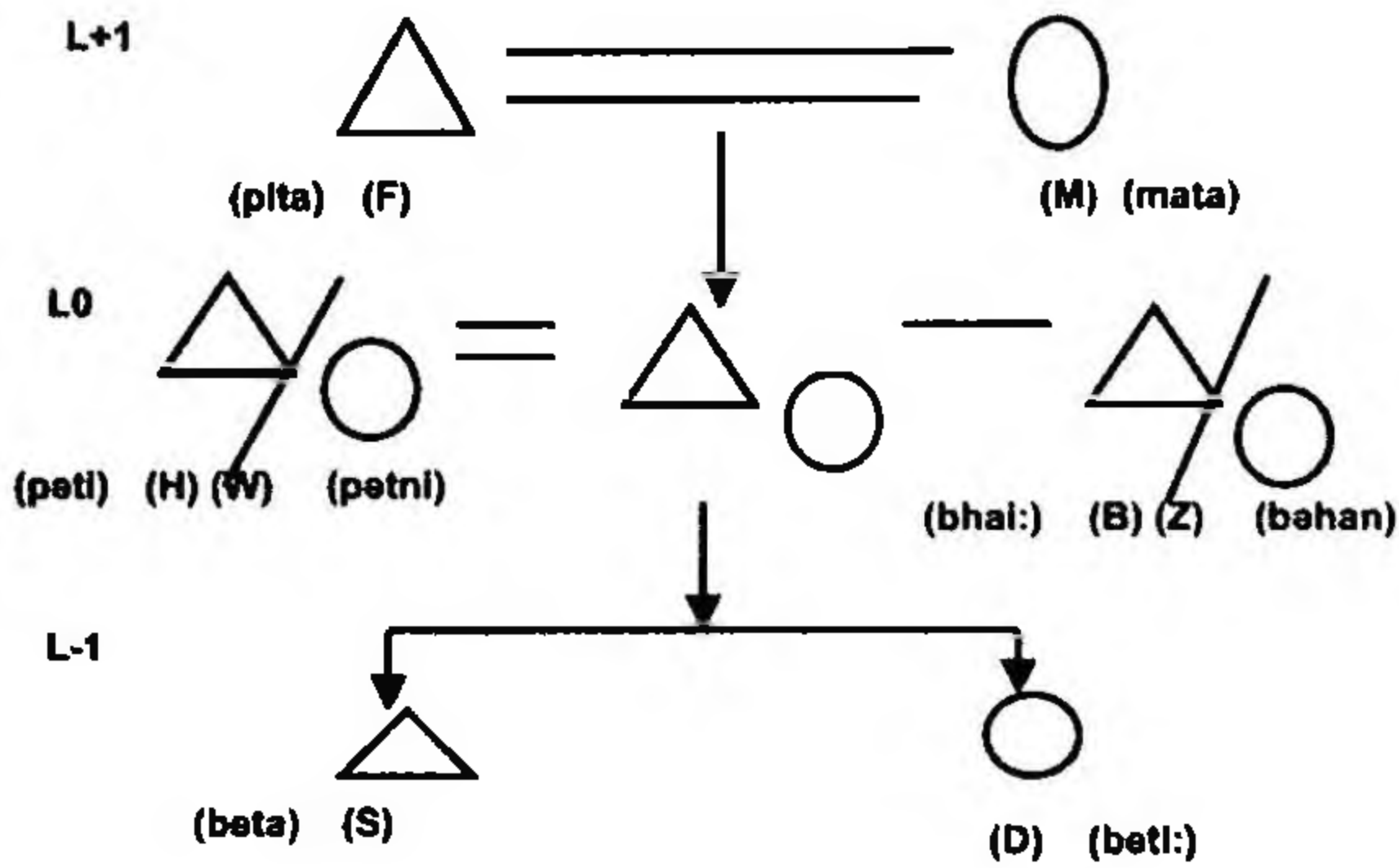
#### Nuclear family



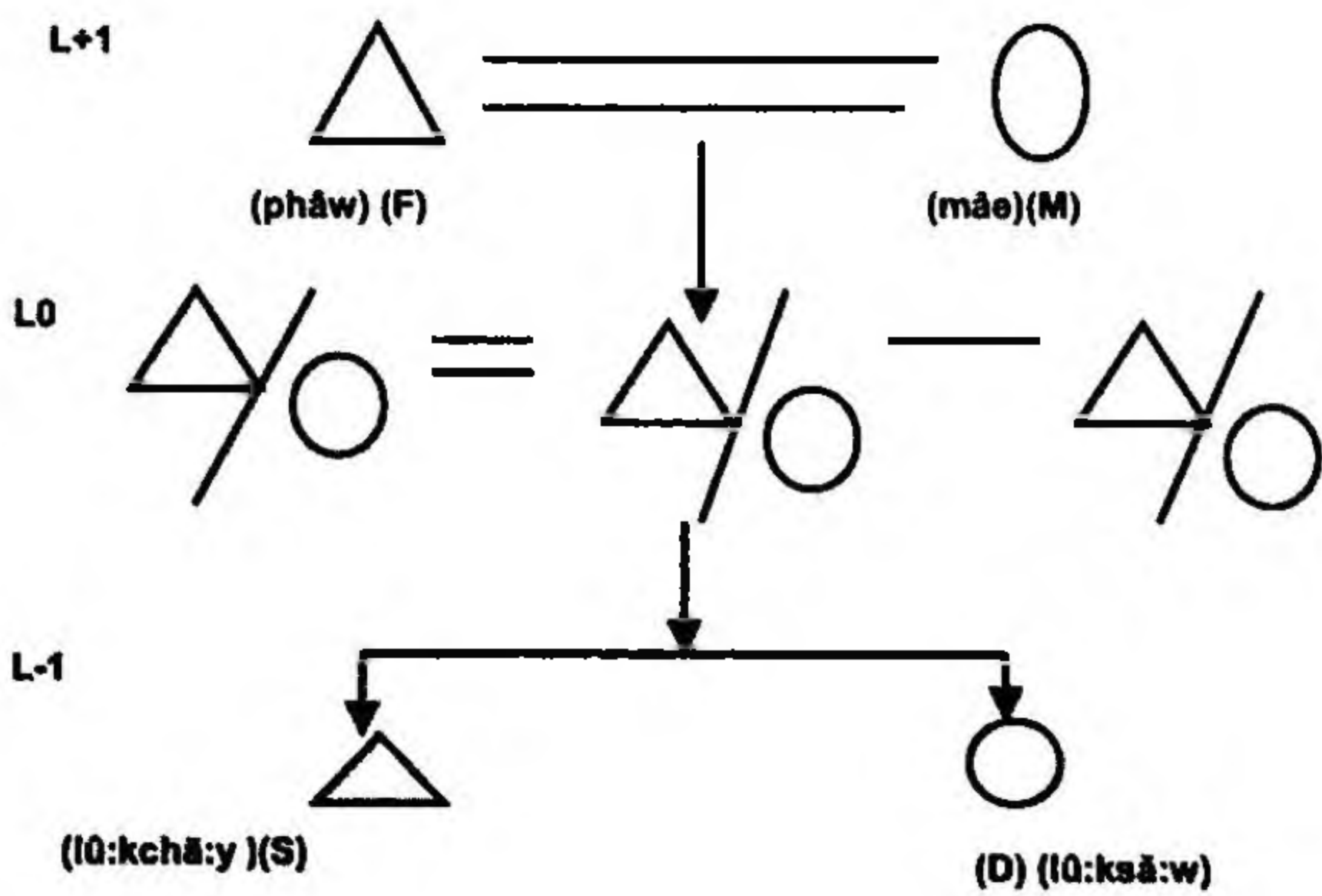
Code	Hindi	Thai	Glosses
M	mata/mā		Mother
F	pita/bap		Father
D	beti/putrid		Daughter

<b>S</b>	bəta/putra		Son
	Pət̪ni		
	Pəti		
	Bahi		
	Behen		

**Hindi**



**Thai**



**L0 Relations in Hindi and Thai**

BW=(bhabhi:)	WB=(sala) WZ= (sali:)	BW/BH = (phî:khəy)	WB / HB= (nó:ŋkhəy)
ZH=(bahnoi:)	(HEB) (jeth) WZ< (HYB) (devər)	ZW/ZH= (phî:səpháy)	WZ/HZ= (nó:ŋsəpháy)

**L+1 Relations in Hindi and Thai**

(FeB) (tau:)  (FyB) (chacha)	MB= (mama) MZ= (məsi:) WF >(səsur) HF	FeB / MeB (lūŋ) FB < FyB (ā:) MyB=(ná:)	WF=(phāwtā:) HF= (phāwphūa)
FZ= (phu:phi:)	WM > (sas) HM	FeZ / MeZ= (pā: ) FyZ = (ā: ) MyZ = (ná:)	WM = (māeyāi) HM= (māephūa)

**L+2 Relations in Hindi and Thai**

FF=(dada)	MF=(nana)	FF = (pù:)	MF=(yâ: )
FM= (dadi:)	MM=(nani:)	FM =( tā: )	MM=(yāy)

Therefore based on above linguistic expression in the two compared languages the following assumptions are drawn:

1. Nuclear Family: Thai uses Relative Age as an additional parameter. Hence over differentiation in Thai and under differentiation in Hindi, can be seen.

2. 1st order relations: Hindi and Thai both show paternal side domination, but there here is over differentiations in Thai due to the additional parameter of Relative Age.

Different terms for Grand parents of Father's and Mother's side in both the languages show a similar socio-cultural system in the two societies with paternal domination, well marked in Hindi. In Thai language this is maternal.

3. 1st order relations for younger generations i.e. grand children, the Son's children and the Daughter's children have different terms in Hindi but not in Thai. So there is under differentiation in Thai but over differentiation in Hindi. In Hindi speaking cultures the Daughter's children are like guests but Son's children are part of the family. Hence, there is a difference in terms as well.

4. The 2nd and 3rd order relations in the two languages show a marked contrast. Hindi shows different terms for spouses of siblings, spouses of parent's siblings with greater differentiation as compared to Thai where father's and mother's or son's and daughter's relations are clubbed together, with only Relative Age, i.e., older or younger as an additional, significant parameter.

This is important because it also shows underlying socio-cultural differences in the rights and duties in the two cultural systems.

5. In the 3rd and 4th order relations we find derivations to show the relations in the extended family system. In Thai language there are no new terms or derivations for these relations in the extended family showing a marked under differentiation.

### **Conclusion**

The Thai language uses the parameter of relative age, in addition to the patrilineal/ paternal dominance in a joint family system as in Hindi but the joint family system of Hindi speaking culture recognize an extended family system with greater differentiation in terms of reference and also in terms of address, reflecting greater differentiation in the roles and obligations of the members in an extended family, which is not there in Thai language.

The Thai language recognizes relative age as an important parameter while matrilineal is not reflected so much in terms of reference or address. In Hindi the patrilineal system reflects both in terms of reference and terms of address with greater differentiation in the same for paternal rather than the maternal relations.

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**Kinship terms in Hindi and Thia**

SW	/bəhu:/	/lū:ksəphái/
DH	/damad/	/lū:kkhəy/
HeB	/jeth/	/phî:chā:ysā: mī:/
HyB	/devər/	/nó:ŋchā:ysā: mī:/
WM	/sas/	/māeyāi/
HM	/sas/	/māephūa/
WB	/sala/	/phî:khəy/
WZ	/sali:/	/nó:ŋ səpháy/
SS	/pota/	/lā:nchāy/
SD	/poti:/	/lā:nchāy/
DS	/nati:/	/lā:nsāw/
DD	/natin/	/lā:nsāw/
MFF	/pərnana/	/tùat/
MMF	/pərnana/	/tùat/
MFM	/pəmani:/	/tùat/
MFF	/pəmani:/	/tùat/
FFM	/pərdadi:/	/tùat/
FMF	/pərdadi:/	/tùat/
MZH	/mōsa/	/pāsā: mī:/
WFB	/chachiasasur/	/lūŋkhəy/ /ā:khəy/
HFB	/chachiasasur/	/pā:səphái/ /ná:səphái/
WBW	/səlhəj/	/nó:ŋ səpháy/
FES	/chəchera/	/khəy/
MZS	/mōserabhai:/	/lū:kchā:y pā:/
FBD	/chəcheri:bəhen/	/lū:ksā:wpā:/
MBD	/məmeri:bəhen/	/lū:ksā:w/lūŋ/
HBW	/jethani:/	/pā:səphái/

HZH	/nəndoɪ:/	/sā:mī: phī:sàpháy/
SW	/bəhu:/	/lû:ksàphái/
DH	/damad/	/lû:kkhəy/
HeB	/jeth/	/phī:chā:ysā: mī:/
HyB	/devər/	/nó:ηchā:ysā: mī:/
WM	/sas/	/māeyāi/
HM	/sas/	/māephūa/
WB	/sala/	/phī:khəy/
WZ	/sali:/	/nó:η sàpháy/
SS	/pota/	/lā:nchāy/
SD	/poti:/	/lā:nchāy/
DS	/nati:/	/lā:nsāw/
DD	/natin/	/lā:nsāw/
MFF	/pəmana/	/tùat/
MMF	/pəmana/	/tùat/
MFM	/pəmani:/	/tùat/
MFF	/pəmani:/	/tùat/
FFM	/pərdadi:/	/tùat/
FMF	/pərdadi:/	/tùat/
MZH	/məsa/	/pāsā: mī:/
WFB	/chachiasasur/	/lūηkhəy/ /ā:khəy/
		/pā:sàphái/
HFB	/chachiasasur/	/ná:sàphái/
WBW	/səlhəj/	/nó:η sàpháy/
FES	/chəchera/	/khəy/
MZS	/məserabhai:/	/lû:kchā:y pā:/
FBD	/chəcheri:bəhən/	/lû:ksā:wpā:/
MBD	/məmeri:bəhən/	/lû:ksā:w/lūη/
HBW	/jethani:/	/pā:sàphái/
HZH	/nəndoɪ:/	/sā:mī: phī:sàpháy/