

Nxaʔamxcín (Salish) kinship terms

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Abstract The core kinship terms of the Nxaʔamxcín language are presented with English and Nsyłxcin glosses. This treatment illuminates the similarities and differences among the three languages creating a resource for language teachers on the Colville Reservation, where Nxaʔamxcín is taught. The organization of the data also lends itself to comparative investigation by Salishan linguists, anthropologists, and other interested parties.

1 Introduction

Nxaʔamxcín is a Salish language spoken on and near the Colville Reservation in north-central Washington State. Common dialect names of this ancestral language include Moses, Columbia(n), Wenatchee, Entiat, and Chelan. Most speakers of Nxaʔamxcín currently live in small communities across the reservation alongside speakers of Nsyłxcin (Colville-Okanagan), a sister language.¹ Inter-marriage between speakers of Nxaʔamxcín and Nsyłxcin has occurred and a certain degree of bilingualism obtains in some families. Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade (1998) estimate the number of Nxaʔamxcín speakers at 40 but able-bodied fluent speakers probably number a dozen or fewer. Nsyłxcin may have as many as 300 fluent speakers, many of whom do not live on the Colville Reservation but rather 'across the line' in the Canadian portion of the Okanagan valley. Both languages are supported by tribally-funded language preservation programs that seek to record, analyze, and teach the local languages for future generations. In this paper, we present a preliminary sketch of the kinship terms known to us in Nxaʔamxcín. Because of the close cultural, linguistic, and historical ties to the Nsyłxcin-speaking people, we provide the Nsyłxcin equivalents from Mattina and Jack (1992). The Nxaʔamxcín speakers we consulted are Norine Smith, Matilda Bearcub, and Naomi Dick, all of Nespelem, WA and Mary Marchand, of Disautel, WA. We also consulted Kinkade (1981) in which most of the kinship terms presented here may also be found. Although we recognize that some details of the kinship system are missing from this sketch, our immediate objectives are to create a pedagogical resource for language teachers on the Colville reservation and to stimulate commentary and comparison among Salishan linguists.

The overall structure of the Nxaʔamxcín kinship term system is very similar to that of Nsyłxcin. The core determinants for blood relations are sex of ego, sex of relative, sex of linking relative, and age relative to ego. Three of these determinants apply in ego's generation, but in none of the eight generations that we looked at did all four determinants apply simultaneously. The system is most complex in ego's and the first ascending generation. With the exception of the first ascending generation, the system decreases in complexity in mirror-image fashion

¹Nsyłxcin is also known as Nsəlxcín. Also spoken on the Colville Reservation is Nimípu (Nez Perce), which is a Sahaptian language. We have not studied the Nimípu kinship terms although it would be interesting to see what inter-family influences may have occurred.

progressing away from ego's generation. The determinants of the blood relation system are schematized in Table 1.

In the first ascending/descending generations, terms for parents and children are based on the sex of the ego and the sex of the relative. Terms for uncle, aunt, niece, and nephew are based on the sex of ego and the sex of the linking relative.

Table 1. Determinants in the Nxaʔamxcín kinship system. (A = ascending; D = descending)

| Gen. | Determinants | Gloss | No. of Terms |
|------|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| A4. | Generation | great-great grandparents | one |
| A3. | 1) sex of relative | great grandparents | two |
| A2. | 1) sex of relative 2) sex of linking relative | grandparents | four |
| A1. | 1) sex of ego 2) sex of relative OR sex of linking relative | parents, uncles, aunts | eight |
| Ego | 1) sex of ego 2) sex of relative 3) younger/older | siblings, cousins | eight |
| D1. | 1) sex of ego 2) sex of relative OR sex of linking relative | children, nieces/nephews | six |
| D2. | 1) sex of relative 2) sex of linking relative | grandchildren | four |
| D3. | 1) sex of relative | great grandchildren | two |
| D4. | Generation | great-great grandchildren | one |

We found eight terms used exclusively for in-laws. There is a single term for father-in-law but the term for mother-in-law depends on the sex of ego. A single term is used for ego's opposite sex siblings-in-law; same sex siblings-in-law are identified on the basis of sex of ego. A widow's brother-in-law (i.e. (deceased) husband's brother) is referred to by a unique in-law term. The parents of ego's child's spouse are referred to by a single term. There are two terms for step-parents, based on the sex of the relative.

2 The data

Table 2 presents the Nxaʔamxcín kinship reference terms and their Nsyłxcin equivalents. For each numbered row, the first line contains the singular term, the second line the plural term (if collected). For the Nxaʔamxcín terms only, the indented items on the second line are alternate pronunciations of the term in the first line. These may be appellative or diminutive forms. The notation in the glosses is as follows: a gloss in parentheses applies to Nxaʔamxcín only; a gloss in

square brackets applies to Nsyłxcin only; a gloss without brackets or parentheses applies in both languages.²

Table 2. Nxaʔamxcín kinship terms with Nsyłxcin equivalents.

| No. | Nxaʔamxcín | Gloss | Nsyłxcin |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 1. | snəkʷskínt | one's Indian people | səŋqsíłx ^w |
| 2. | nxiʔcín nxiʔxiʔcín | elder(s), ancestor(s) | nxaʔcín |
| 3. | yómʔəm ³ yəmyóməməlx | elder, ancestor | xaʔxʔít xaʔxʔít |
| 4. | | old person | kʔíwəlx kʔəwʔíwəlx |
| 5. | łʔəłłʔəłp łʔəłłʔəłpəlx | old man; [old woman's husband, elders, parents] | łʔəłłʔəłp łʔəłłʔəłp |
| 6. | pətwʔínʔx ^w pətpətwʔínʔxəlx | old woman; [old man's wife] | pətpwínax ^w pətpətwínax ^w |
| 7. | q ^w úpsaʔ | great-great grandparent/ grandchild | q ^w úpsaʔ təłq ^w úpsaʔ |
| 8. | tʔatʔúpaʔ | great grandmother/ granddaughter; [great grandparent/grandchild] | tʔatʔúpaʔ tʔatʔúpaʔ |
| 9. | kʔəkʔáwʔaʔ | great grandfather/ grandson; [great grandparent/grandchild] | tʔatʔúpaʔ tʔatʔúpaʔ |
| 10. | słəłápaʔ łápaʔ | father's father; father's parent's brother; male's son's child; [father's parent's male cousin] | słəłápaʔ təłsłəłápaʔ |

²Mattina and Jack (1992) identify some Nsyłxcin terms as 'derisive'. We omit this information about the Nsyłxcin terms because we did not inquire about derisive terms in Nxaʔamxcín. We direct the reader to Mattina and Jack (1992) for a detailed description of the Nsyłxcin kinship terms.

³Norine Smith and Naomi Dick, sisters, pronounce this form with glottalized *m*. Matilda Bearcub has plain *m*. Kinkade (1981) records it as /yóməm/.

| No. | Nxaʔamxcín | Gloss | Nsylvxcín |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 11. | stətíʔaʔ ⁴ (s)tíʔaʔ | mother's father; mother's parent's brother; mother's parent's male cousin; male's daughter's child | k'ík'waʔ tətík'ík'waʔ |
| 12. | qəqán'aʔ qán'aʔ | father's mother; father's parent's sister; father's parent's female cousin; female's son's child | qáqnaʔ |
| 13. | kəkíy'aʔ kíy'aʔ | mother's mother; mother's parent's sister; mother's parent's female cousin; female's daughter's child | stəmtímaʔ |
| 14. | qáʕaʔ | mother's sister; mother's female cousin; stepmother (mother's brother's wife) | sw'aʔw'ásaʔ |
| 15. | səmʔál | father's brother; father's male cousin; (stepfather) (father's sister's husband) | smiʔt tətsmíʔt |
| 16. | qásaʔ | mother's brother; mother's male cousin (mother's sister's husband) | səsíʔ tətəsəsíʔ |
| 17. | tík ^w aʔ | father's sister; father's female cousin (father's brother's wife) | sk ^w úk'iʔ tətšk ^w úk'iʔ |
| 18. | ləʔáw ləʔləʔáw | male's father | lʔiw ləʔlʔiw |
| 19. | k'aʔálp | stepfather | ʔwístən tʔwístən |
| 20. | maʔástəm | female's father | m'ístəm m'əsm'ístəm |
| 21. | sk ^w uy | male's mother | sk ^w uy sk ^w yšk ^w uy |

⁴Kinkade (1981) has /ttíʔaʔ/.

| No. | Nxaʔamxciŋ | Gloss | Nsylvciŋ |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 22. | tumʔ | female's mother | tumʔ təmʔtúmʔ |
| 23. | qack | male's older brother/ male cousin | ʔqáqcaʔ ʔəʔqáqcaʔ |
| 24. | yúk ^w aʔ | female's older brother/ male cousin | ʔqáqcaʔ ʔəʔqáqcaʔ |
| 25. | cákaʔ | male's older sister/ female cousin | ʔkíkxaʔ ʔəʔkíkxaʔ |
| 26. | kəx | female's older sister/ female cousin | ʔkíkxaʔ ʔəʔkíkxaʔ |
| 27. | síncaʔ | male's younger brother/ male cousin | ʔsísəncaʔ ʔəʔsísəncaʔ |
| 28. | sín'aʔ | female's younger brother/ male cousin | ʔsísəncaʔ ʔəʔsísəncaʔ |
| 29. | ǰíl'aʔ | male's younger sister/ female cousin | ʔcəcʔúps ʔcaʔcʔúps |
| 30. | cáy'aʔ cəcáy'aʔ | female's younger sister/ female cousin | ʔcəcʔúps ʔcaʔcʔúps |
| 31. | sqəl'tmíx ^w | man; [husband] | sqəltmíx ^w sqəlqəltmíx ^w |
| 32. | sǰálwiʔ | husband | sǰílwiʔ sǰálǰəlwiʔ, sǰáǰlwiʔ |
| 33. | səmʔám(əm) səmʔamʔáməm | woman | tkətmílx ^w tkətkətmílx ^w |
| 34. | núǰ ^w nuǰ ^w | wife | náǰ ^w nəǰ ^w |
| 35. | naq ^w əc'tən | widow's husband's brother; [widower's (deceased) brother's wife] | nq ^w íc'tən nq ^w əc'q ^w əc'tən |
| 36. | ʔasǰáʔǰaʔ | father-in-law | sǰaǰáʔ ʔəʔsǰaǰáʔ |

| No. | Nxaʔamxcin | Gloss | Nsyɫxcin |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 37. | nacʰstən | male's mother-in-law | ʔcick ʔəʔcick |
| 38. | cak | female's mother-in-law | ʔcick ʔəʔcick |
| 39. | sc'axt | male's sister's husband; wife's brother | sc'ixt |
| 40. | nəskáw | female's brother's wife; husband's sister | nškiw |
| 41. | sáʔstəm | opposite sex sibling of spouse; opposite sex spouse of sibling; opposite sex spouse of spouse's sibling; [opposite sex young friend of one's spouse] | saʔstám saʔsaʔstám |
| 42. | | [husbands of two sisters or cousins; wives of two brothers or cousins] | nkʷəl'mút |
| 43. | sl'aǎt ⁵ | brother; male friend; [friend; male cousin] | sl'aǎt sl'əǎl'aǎt |
| 44. | səntx ^w ús səntx ^w úsəlx, səntəx ^w tx ^w ús | (brother; male cousin, (close male to male friend); [female cousin; sister; friend] | səntx ^w ús səntəx ^w tx ^w ús |
| 45. | ʔásq ^w əsaʔ | son | sq ^w siʔ ʔəʔsq ^w siʔ |
| 46. | scəm'ált scəcəm'ált | children, [small child] | sq ^w əsq ^w siʔ sq ^w əsq ^w aʔsifʔa |
| 47. | sq ^w əsq ^w əsaʔ | small child, (baby) | sq ^w əsq ^w siʔ sq ^w əsq ^w aʔsifʔa |
| 48. | st'ámkaʔ | daughter | st'əmkʔílt |
| 49. | snak'ǎx ^w | daughter's husband | sník'əǎx ^w |

⁵Some speakers generalize this term to refer to a friend of either sex. Mary Marchand reports that other speakers restrict the range of its use to that described here.

| No. | Nxaʔamxcín | Gloss | Nsylvxcín |
|-----|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 50. | sáɸən | son's wife | sípən |
| 51. | słəwált | male's brother's child, [brother, sister, or cousin's child] | słwilt słutwíl•t |
| 52. | məʔíft | female's brother's child; [brother, sister, or cousin's child] | słwilt słutwíl•t |
| 53. | tunx | male's sister's child; [brother, sister, or cousin's child] | słwilt słutwíl•t |
| 54. | sq ^w ásaʔ | female's sister's child, [brother, sister, or cousin's child] | słwilt słutwíl•t |
| 55. | | [grandchild; brother, sister or cousin's grandchild] | sənʔímaʔt sənʔəmʔímaʔt |
| 56. | | [grandchild-in-law] | nk'íʔílt |
| 57. | | [son or daughter's widow(er)] | sk'íʔílp |
| 58. | natámɸən | son- or daughter-in-law's parents; (sister- or brother- in-law's parents) | ntímtən |
| 59. | sktámqən | relatives | stm'áliʔs |
| 60. | | [in-laws] | sənʔxəmtán |

In Figures 1a and b, below, the kinship terms of Table 2 are displayed in a graphic designed to show how the kinship terms relate to male and female egos, respectively. Certain terms (e.g. 19, 31, 33) are left off the figures for ease of exposition.

The number-term key for Figures 1a and 1b are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7. q ^w úpsa? | 28. sín'a? |
| 8. t'at'úpa? | 29. xíl'a? |
| 9. k'ək'áw'a? | 30. cáy'a? |
| 10. sǎxǎpa? | 32. sǎlwi? |
| 11. stətíl'a? | 34. núx ^w nux ^w |
| 12. qəqán'a? | 36. ʔasǎáʔǎa? |
| 13. kəkíy'a? | 37. nacótən |
| 14. qáǎa? | 38. cak |
| 15. səmʔál | 39. sc'axt |
| 16. qása? | 40. nəskáw |
| 17. tík ^w a? | 41. sáʔstəm |
| 18. ləʔáw | 45. ʔásq ^w əsa? |
| 20. maʔástəm | 48. st'ámka? |
| 21. sk ^w uy | 49. snak'ix ^w |
| 22. tum' | 50. sápən |
| 23. qack | 51. stəwált |
| 24. yúk ^w a? | 52. məʔíft |
| 25. cáka? | 53. tunx |
| 26. kəx | 54. sq ^w əsa? |
| 27. sínca? | 58. natámtən |

3 Discussion

The parallels between the Nxaʔamxcín and Nsylvxcín systems are striking if not unexpected. More interesting, perhaps, are the differences. First, we notice that the Nxaʔamxcín system is richer in terms for blood kin in these generations: A/D3 (great grandparent/child); Ego; D1 (nieces, nephews). Nxaʔamxcín distinguishes the sex of the relative in A/D3. In ego's generation, Nxaʔamxcín cross-classifies by sex of ego with sex of sibling, resulting in eight terms rather than Nsylvxcín's four. Ego's nieces and nephews (but not children) are also cross-classified by sex of ego and sex of ego's sibling, resulting in four terms for niece/nephew compared with Nsylvxcín's two.

The Nsylvxcín terms cover several categories for which we have not found Nxaʔamxcín equivalents. These may represent gaps in our research rather than lexical lacunæ. There are several instances of semantically shifted cognates that would benefit from wider comparative investigation. For example, Nsylvxcín /k'ík'waʔ/ (11) is formally cognate with Nxaʔamxcín /k'ək'áw'aʔ/ (9). The sex of the referent is retained (male), but the generation differs. The term /səntx^wús/ refers to sibling, cousin, and close friend in both languages, but in Nsylvxcín it generally refers to females, in Nxaʔamxcín to males.⁶ The reader will notice that at least a dozen kinship terms do not appear to be formally cognate in the two languages.

Mattina and Jack (1992) provide morphophonological analyses of the kinship terms they present but the limited nature of the data we collected on Nxaʔamxcín caution us not to do the same here. The few plural forms collected suggest that plural reference is accomplished with CVC reduplication (e.g. 2, 18) or suffixation of /-lx/ (e.g. 5, 44), or both (e.g. 3, 6). Four of the diminutive alternates in Table 2 are simplex forms of their C1- reduplicated reference terms (10,

⁶Mattina and Jack (1992:130) note that /səntx^wús/ is also 'a reserved or polite term of address between coeval members of the opposite sex' in Nsylvxcín.

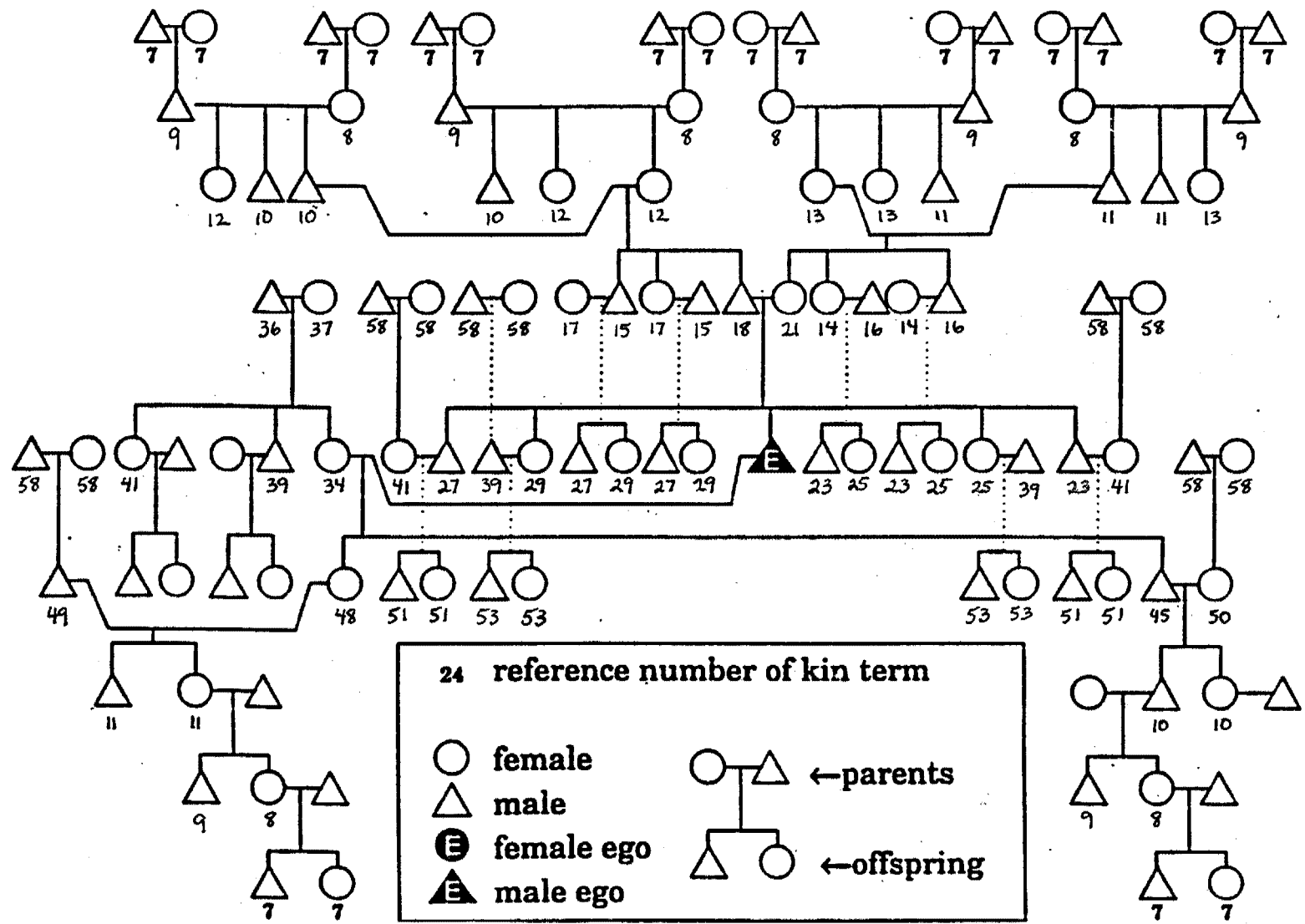


Figure 1a. Nxa'amxcín kinship terms for male ego.

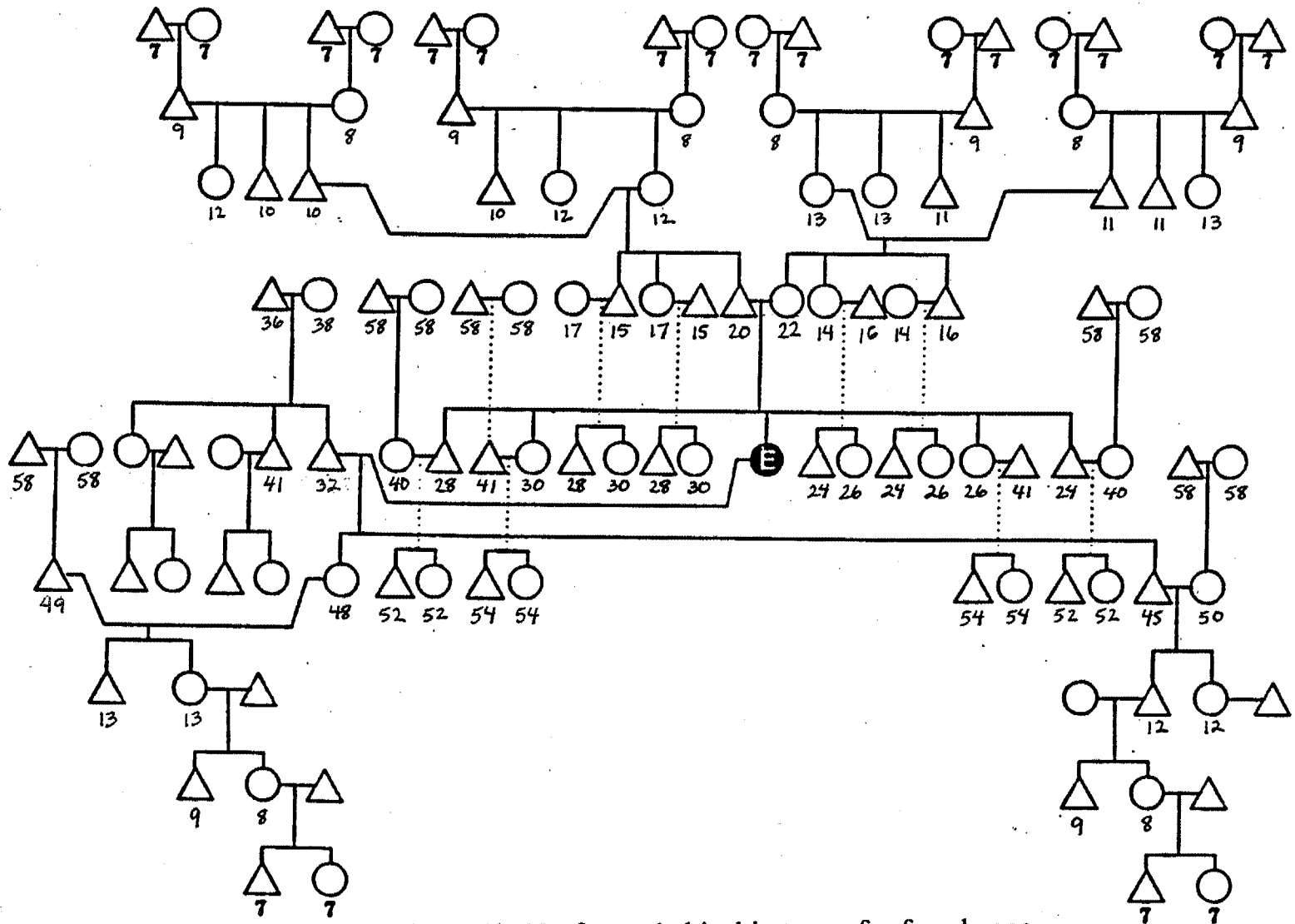


Figure 1b. Nxa'amxcín kinship terms for female ego.

11, 12, 13). These apparent backformations occur (sometimes with other phonological modifications) in Nsyłxcin as well (cf. Mattina and Jack 1992:131). Diminutive C1 reduplication seems to be at work in two pairs of forms: (30) /cáy'aʔ/ and /cəcáy'aʔ/; (46) /scəmált/ and /scəcmált/. The terms for male's younger brother /sıncaʔ/ and female's younger brother /sín'aʔ/ must be morphophonologically related but we are not sure how best to characterize the relationship. In general, the morphological make-up of most terms is complex, revealing reduplicative and affixal material (especially lexical suffixes and /-aʔ/) applied to synchronically opaque roots.

4 Other related terms

We conclude with two brief lists of kinship-related items. First, our corpus includes these reciprocal predicates:⁷

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------|
| (1) | ʃəlwiʔáw'səlx ʃəlwiʔ=aw's_lx husband=l.s._3pS | 'they are married' |
| (2) | nuʃ ^w nuʃ ^w áw'səlx nuʃ ^w nuʃ ^w =aw's_lx wife=l.s._3pS | 'they are married' |
| (3) | sincaʔáw'stk sincaʔ=aw's_tk Ma's younger bro=l.s._1pS | 'we are brothers' |
| (4) | sín'aʔáw'səlx sín'aʔ=aw's_lx Fe's younger bro=l.s._3pS | 'they are brothers' |
| (5) | cay'áw'səlx cay'aʔ=aw's_lx Fe's younger sis=l.s._3pS | 'they are sisters' |

The predicates are formed from a kinship term suffixed with the lexical suffix /-aw's/ 'middle, center', just as they are in Nsyłxcin (Mattina and Jack 1992:132). These predicates are inflected with the intransitive subject clitics: first person plural subject is /tk/; third person subject is null with (usually) optional /_lx/ for plural referents.⁸ We do not yet understand precisely how these predicates are used in conjunction with the younger/older and sex of ego distinctions made by the predicates' stem words.⁹

Second, we collected a number of non-kin terms describing human life stages and relationships that are used as reference terms and/or appellatives.

⁷Abbreviations are: l.s. = lexical suffix; p = plural; S = subject; Fe = female; Ma = male; bro = brother; sis = sister.

⁸First plural subject clitic /tk/ is both pro- and enclitic. Naomi Dick and Norine Smith use /tk/ but recognize /kt/ as marking this function as well. Other speakers pronounce this clitic [kt].

⁹For example, can a female assert that her younger and older brothers are brothers using these reciprocal predicates? What determines the use /sʃəlwiʔáw's/ and /nuʃ^wnuʃ^wáw's/?

| | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| (6) | xəxálaʔ | 'infant' |
| (7) | t't'a ^o wúmaʔ | 'little one, baby' |
| (8) | wəxtált | 'toddler' |
| (9) | tət w'ít | 'young boy' |
| (10) | wítaʔ | 'little boy, sonny' |
| (11) | ki ^o án'aʔ | 'young girl' |
| (12) | ʔánaʔ | 'little girl, girlie' |
| (13) | kihán'aʔ | 'teenaged girl, virgin' |
| (14) | t'íʔík | 'teenaged boy' |
| (15) | cəcm'ált | 'youth' |
| (16) | staʔawtált | 'youngest child' |
| (17) | q'aʔáw's | 'middle (child)' |
| (18) | sxʔitəx ^w ált | 'oldest child' |
| (19) | k'ʔháʔəl | 'orphan' |
| (20) | səsícəlq ^w | 'bachelor' |
| (21) | ʔuʔál'əmt | 'widow(er)' |
| (22) | scəsált | 'adopted child' |
| (23) | n(a)ʔasəsál' | 'twins' ¹⁰ |
| (24) | sckúʔən | 'mistress, borrowed woman' |
| (25) | sxəmən'k ^w ís | 'sweetheart' |
| (26) | siyúmən ¹¹ | 'woman's rival for a man' |
| (27) | xəmán | 'enemy' |
| (28) | ʔálk ^w mən | 'slave' |
| (29) | skint | 'Indian people' |

Another term, /ʔwásən/, may belong here or in Table 2. This term refers to a relative who takes care of ego when ego's parent(s) dies. We are not sure what sexual and generational restrictions may apply to it.¹²

Having outlined the Nxaʔamxcín kinship term system we see more clearly what needs to be collected and analyzed. We welcome comments and additions from Nxaʔamxcín speakers and linguists.

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¹⁰There is some debate over whether this term refers to both identical and fraternal twins. We will continue to look for separate terms, if two exist.

¹¹Nsylvxcin uses /syúmən/ to refer to 'buddy, close friend (male to male)' (Mattina and Jack, p.124).

¹²We note that it is cognate with Montana Salish /ʔwéstn/ 'aunt/uncle after death of ego's parent' and Nsylvxcin /ʔwístn/ 'stepfather'. Mary Marchand observed that a female relative who 'adopts' an infant who has lost its mother might be referred to with /ʔwásən/, but the young age of the child would likely result in the child calling this female relative by the sex-appropriate term for 'mother'.