

PATRIARCHALIC TRADITION IN USAGE OF KINSHIP TERMS IN LITHUANIAN AND HINDI LANGUAGES

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This paper analyses the systems of kinship terms (KT) of two languages – Lithuanian and Hindi. Systematic analysis of KT in different Indo-European languages opens a possibility for comparative-typological study, which allows better understanding of family structure and kinship relations of different ethnic groups. The main goal here is to examine influence of patriarchal family traditions on formation and usage of KT in Lithuanian and Hindi. The historic-comparative method of study is mainly used in this paper. Functionally KT were studied in communication process. Today, when modern society experiences alienation, estrangement in kinship relations, and lack of respect for elderly people, research of KT is relevant not only in comparative linguistics and sociolinguistics but also in education of language culture.

Indo-European linguistics has always focused on studies of kinship terms. Together with a number of works by foreign researchers in KT field (Delbrück, 1889, Schrader, 1904, Filin, 1948, Trubachov, 1959, Freidrich, 1964, Szemerényi, 1977) works of Lithuanian linguists can be mentioned as well (Salys, 1986, Sabaliauskas, 1996, R. Buivydienė, 1990, 1997). KT are interesting not only because of their archaic nature but also because of a complex historic development.

The main goals of this paper are: 1) to present a comprehensive view and classification of KT inventory in Lithuanian and Hindi; 2) to discuss the main consistent patterns in origin and historic development of KT systems; 3) to examine the influence of patriarchal family traditions on formation and usage of KT.

Delbrück, the first scholar who studied KT, already pointed out that linguistic analysis of KT would not be fruitful, if the terms are separated from their historic foundation¹. Most linguists and anthropologists support patriarchal explanation of the Indo-European social organization (Freidrich, Szemerényi, Buivydienė, Karve, Chakladar). In Indo-Aryan evolution the family always meant the joint family made up of many generations of collateral relatives living under one roof and sharing a common heritage. The property was held by the eldest

¹ Delbrück, 1889, 392.

male descendants of a common ancestor. South of the Himalayan range, the whole of the river system fed by the Himalayas comprises a region where languages derived from Sanskrit have been spoken, and where patriarchal institutions have prevailed. According to Zinkevičius, namely, such organization has determined formation of KT related to husband's line². A large number of etymologically related kinship terms have been reconstructed:

skr. *vīra*, hin. *vīr*, lit. *výras*
 skr. *śvaśura*, hin. *sasur*, lit. *šėšuras*
 skr. *devara*, hin. *devar*, lit. *dīeveris*
 skr. *devrānī*, hin. *devrānī*, lit. *dieveriėnė*
 skr. *pati*, hin. *pati*, lit. *pàts*
 skr. *jethānī*, hin. *jethānī*, lit. *jėntė*

KT mentioned above are agreed in pointing to a society that has been patriarchal, patrilocal (the bride leaving her household to join that of her husband's family), and patrilineal (descent reckoned by the male line).

In the studies of origin and historic development of KT the very favourable fact is that KT are one of the closest and most stable lexical-semantic paradigms.

In order to examine social-biological structure of kinship relations and terms reflecting them in more detail, this paper presents a few tables of KT used in modern Lithuanian and Hindi that are based on a logical principle. Since KT always have a relative meaning, i.e. the meaning of KT always has two poles – “speaking person” (ego), in respect to who the kinship is determined, and “person in quest”, therefore a connecting center of several generations of KT presented in the table are ego representing a male and a female. Kinship relations are divided into several groups:

1. Blood kinship (parents-children kinship in the table is marked by the line outgoing from the sign X);
2. Marital kinship (marked by the sign X in the table).

The systems of marital kinship presented by Buivydienė was used for the classification Lithuanian KT³.

Comparing inventory of KT used it has been noticed that terms for naming husband's relatives have a greater variety. Lithuanian language used to have more of such type of generic names that now are not in use: *jėntė* and derivative name *dieveriėnė*. We can find KT close by phonetic structure in Hindi: *jethānī* and *devrānī*. Presupposition could be made that roots of these words are congenerous. This allows us to look for analogies in composition of these words that confirm their archaic nature and origin from the same parent language.

In the study of characteristics of usage of lit. *jėntė* the hierarchy of kinship relations becomes clear, which testifies that in an ancient Lithuanian family the wife of husband's brother had a different name that distinguished her from a woman married into the family – the daughter-in-law, lit. *martī*. Patriarchal family traditions are deeply rooted in India, therefore the husband's

² Zinkevičius, 1984, 57.

³ Buivydienė, 1997.

brothers and their wives are clearly distinguished by special names. In terms of the daughter-in-law, the husband's junior and older brothers have different social status, therefore their KT are also different: *jeth*, *devar*. According to Karve, in the whole Hindi spoken region the eldest brother called *jeth* is the head of the family and he expects and gets obedience from all. "A woman is not allowed to speak with the elder brother of her husband; she must not uncover her head before him"⁴. On the other hand, the relations of a woman with the junior brother called *devar* of her husband in India are of complete familiarity. "In modern times this relationship is depicted as that between elder sister and younger brother or between mother and son. But folk-songs and proverbs and older literature leave no doubt at all the relationship was between lovers"⁵.

A woman married into her husband's family from the ancient times is called lit. *martī*, hin. *bahū*. Even though we failed to find any phonetic similarities in the composition of these words, their scope of usage is quite similar. Dictionaries show that *martī* meant "a woman married into the family for all members of the husband's family". Typological parallels can be found in Hindi as well – all elderly members of the husband's family call his wife *bahū*, and junior – *bhābhī*.

The word lit. *vīras* meant not only "spouse" but also "warrior". Congeneric word is hin. *vir* which is derived from skr. *vīra* ("husband", "man", "hero", "warrior"). Thus the ancient Indo-Europeans called a husband by words signifying a warrior and a hero. It is natural since a husband's duties involved family defence. The role of a husband as a master and lord proves other names whose root relics can be found in many languages: lit. *pàts* ("man", "husband") hin. *pati* ("master", "lord", "husband"). In Lithuanian, the meaning of "master" and "lord" can be found in a compound word *vīešpats*.

A number of Indo-European languages show a similar word for the kinship term "husband's father": skr. *śvaśura*, hin. *sasur*, lit. *šėšuras*, lo. *socer*, rus. *свекор*, rom. *sastro*.

The spread of KT "husband's father" also speaks about the patrilocal institution of marriage. Lit. *šėšuras* is etymologically connected with hin. *sasur*. This term developed from the oldest form skr. *śvaśura*. Its original meaning is supposed to be "householder". This term arose from: skr. *sva-* "own" + *śūra* "hero", "man", "fighter", "master". We can be proud of KT *šėšuras*, *anyta* and *úošvis*, *úošvė* which have survived in the Lithuanian language that make a distinction between husband's and wife's parents. However, Hindi does not have different terms for husband's and wife's parents. This is a unique appearance in Hindi KT system where each relative has a different name. Perhaps the Hindi language has never had a separate name for wife's parents since blood KT *pitā* and *mātā* are used while addressing to them. In the modern Lithuanian language terms *úošvis*, *úošvė* are often used in the meaning of "husband's father" and "husband's mother." According to Buivydiene, "this phenomenon is probably of extralinguistic origin: as the lesser family prevails, the patrilocal marriage tradition disappears and the social roles of relatives on both husband's and wife's sides become equal"⁶. It is difficult

⁴ Karve, 1993, 538.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Buivydiene, 1997, 244.

to see equalization of social roles in the society of India, which would determine non-differentiation of husband's and wife's relatives. Most likely psycholinguistic factors have contributed to this. Husband's parents always get more respect. There is no doubt that *sasur* always meant *žėšūras*. It could be implied that wife's parents were called *sasur*, *sās* willing to express respect to them. For example, quite often a euphemism *beṭā* (son) is used speaking about a daughter because a boy is an honor for a family.

There are much fewer KT for wife's relatives. This can be explained by the fact that after marriage relations with wife's family were broken or poorly kept. Ancient Lithuanians had a special term for wife's brother - *lāigonas* - that is not used in the modern language. Supposedly, an origin of such term was conditioned by a significant protector's role of a marrying sister's brother. Wife's brother and sister were called lit. *sváinis*, *sváinė*. It could be assumed that in terms of origin *sváinis*, *sváinė* can be related to the pronoun stem *sva-* (one's). There was no old word at all in the Lithuanian language for the affinity concept "wife of wife's brother" and "husband of husband's sister". This facts clearly points to the partilocal nature of the old marriage. The same terms *sváinis*, *sváinė* are used for affinity "wife of wife's brother" and "husband of husband's sister". According to Buivydienė, today these terms "gradually developed into polysemic words designating all affinitive relations of the ego generation, that are used independantly of the ego sex"⁷.

Hindi has special terms for wife's brother and sister: *sālā*, *sālī*. But wife's relatives are not distinguished by special terms concerning to their age. Different from Lithuanian, Hindi has special names for spouses of wife's brother and sister – *salhaj*, *sārhū*. It could be deemed that existence of such names covers the understanding of proximity-distance in kinship relations. Usage of KT *sālī* prescribes great familiarity and joking talk between a man and the younger sisters of the wife. According to Karve, in Hindi proverbs such a sister-in-law is called half a wife⁸. After the death of wife a man may marry his sister-in-law. Even in present times such marriages take place all over India. Patriarchal family traditions in India have determined not only familiar relations with wife's relatives but also contempt to them. Term hin. *sālā* is very commonly used as a form of strong abuse. "To refer to or address someone as *sālā* is to imply that one has carnal knowledge of his sister"⁹.

Not only husband's relatives but also father's relatives receive more respect in India. The Lithuanian language does not have separate KT for father's or mother's relatives. They are simply *senėlis*, *senėlė*, *dėdė*, and *tetà*. However in Hindi differentiation of father's and mother's relatives is quite clear not only according to KT but also according to social role and the canon of respect. Hin. *dādā* without its literal meaning in vulgar language has a figurative meaning "chieftain" or "head of a group". The phrase *dādā bannā* is known which means "to lead". Meanwhile, hin. *nānī* is used in phrases as a form of mocking. The phrase *nānī marnā* ("death of a grandmother") is used to mock someone's misfortune. For children a proper word to

⁷ Buivydienė, 1997, 241.

⁸ Karve, 1993, 543.

⁹ Snell, Weightman, 1994, 227.

address an old unknown man is not *nānā* but *dādā* and to a middle-age man not *māmā*, but *cācā*. The usage of Hindi KT mentioned above once again proves the excess of respect to father's or husband's relatives.

Not all KT are discussed in this paper. The table does not reflect KT used from brother's and sister's positions and others.

1. Origin and usage of the terms lit. *výras*, *šėšuras*, hin. *pati*, and *dādā* confirm that the formation of these words was determined by patriarchal family traditions according to which the eldest men of father's or husband's family or even the very husband were responsible for safety and running a family.
2. Terms for husband's relatives can be characterized by a greater variety since relations with wife's relatives were badly maintained after marriage.
3. The elder persons not only took leading positions in a patriarchal family but also inherited property. Therefore, a conclusion can be made explaining the reasons why elder relatives from the husband's side have separate names in the Hindi language. Thus variety of KT was determined not only by the factors of social organization but also by related cultural and religious traditions.
4. Lithuanian KT do not reflect differentiation of relatives according to their age.
5. In prevalence of the nuclear family and equalization of relatives' roles a disappearance process can be noticed in the oppositions of KT according to ego sex in the Lithuanian language.

It is interesting to notice that almost each relative in Hindi has his/her own term, from which his/her place in a family tree can be established. It is a pity that upon the equalization of social roles of relatives the traditional KT disappear from the Lithuanian language and cumbersome descriptive terms take their place. Not only our language is debased but also the understanding of kinship proximity.

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Dictionary of Lithuanian KT

Anýta – husband’s mother	senėlis – grandfather
vaikaitis – son’s/daughter’s son	sūnūs – son
vaikaitė – son’s/daughter’s daughter	svainė – husband’s/wife’s sister, husband’s/wife’s brother’s wife
dėdė – father’s/mother’s brother, father’s/mother’s sister’s husband	svainis – husband’s/wife’s brother, husband’s/wife’s sister’s husband
dėdiėnė – father’s/mother’s brother’s wife	šėšuras – husband’s father
dieveriėnė – husband’s brother’s wife	tetà – mother’s/ father’s sister, mother’s/ father’s brother’s wife
dėveris – husband’s brother	tetėnas – mother’s/ father’s sister’s husband
duktė – daughter	tėvas – father
jėntė – husband’s brother’s wife	úošvis – wife’s father
láigonas – wife’s brother	úošvė – wife’s mother
martì – daughter-in-law	výras – husband
mótina – mother	žėntas – son-in-law
móša – husband’s sister	žmonà – wife
senėlė – grandmother	

Dictionary of Hindi KT

Bahū – daughter-in-law	devar – husband’s junior brother
betā – son	devrānī – husband’s junior brother’s wife
betī – daughter	dīdī – elder sister
bhābhī – elder brother’s wife	jeṭh – husband’s elder brother
cācā – elder father’s brother	jeṭhānī – husband’s elder brother’s wife
cācī – elder father’s brother’s wife	jījā – elder sister’s husband
dādā – parental grandfather	māmā – mother’s brother
dādī – parental grandmother	māmī – mother’s brother’s wife
dāmād – son-in-law	mātā – mother

mousā – mother's sister's husband	phūphī – father's sister
mousī – mother's sister	pitā – father
nanad – husband's sister	potā – son's son
nandoī – husband's sister's husband	potī – son's daughter
nānā – maternal grandfather	sālā – wife's brother
nānī – maternal grandmother	sālī – wife's sister
nātīn – daughter's son	salhaj – wife's brother's wife
nātī – daughter's daughter	sās – mother-in-law
pati – husband	sasur – father-in-law
patnī – wife	sārḥū – žmonos sesers vyras
phūphā – father's sister's husband	tāī – junior father's brother
	tāū – junior father's brother's wife

PATRIARCHALINĖ HINDI IR LIETUVIŲ KALBŲ GIMINYSTĖS TERMINŲ VARTOJIMO TRADICIJA

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Santrauka

Giminystės terminų (GT) tyrinėjimas visada buvo indoeuropeistikos dėmesio centre. Tam tikrų kalbų GT sistemų analizė atveria gretinamojo-tipologinio tyrinėjimo, kuris leidžia geriau suprasti įvairių etninių grupių šeimos struktūrą, giminystės santykių aspektus, galimybę. Šiandien, kai visuomenėje jaučiamas susvetimėjimas, giminystės santykių atšalimas, pagarbos vyresniesiems stoka, GT tyrinėjimas aktualus ne tik lingvistikai, bet ir kalbos kultūros ugdymui. Pagrindinis šio darbo tikslas – išnagrinėti patriarchalinių šeimos tradicijų įtaką GT formavimuisi bei vartojimui lietuvių ir hindi kalbose. Tyrinėjimo metodas – istorinis lyginamasis. Funkciniu požiūriu GT yra tiriami bendravimo procese. Rezultatai, nekalbant apie abiejose kalbose aptiktą artimos fonetinės struktūros GT archajiškumą, leidžia ieškoti gilesnių senovės lietuvių ir indų (hindi kalbos vartotojų) visuomenėse paplitusių giminystės santykių socialinių ypatumų atitikmenų.

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Table 1. Lithuanian KT

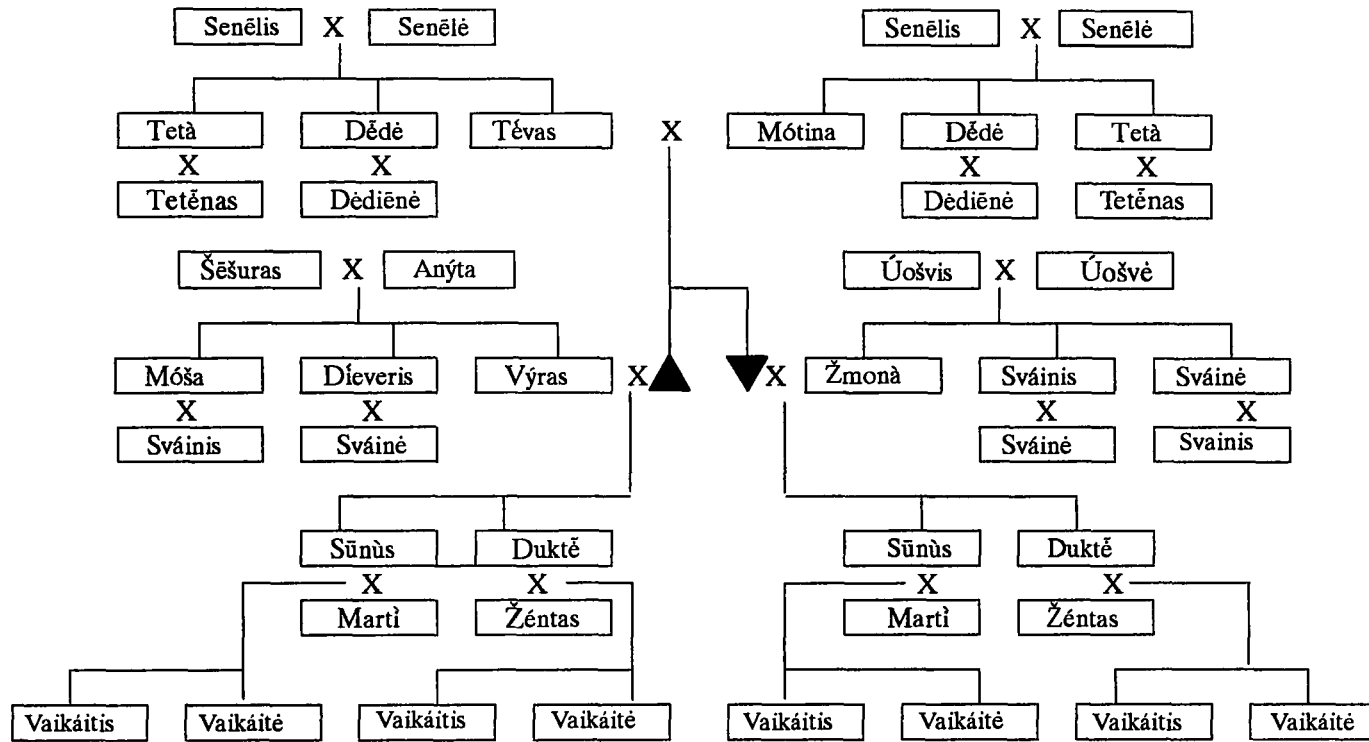


Table 2. Hindi KT

