A UNIVERSAL KINSHIP LANGUAGE

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Abstract

By developing a universal kinship language, I attempt in this paper to resolve the perennial problem of discussing a kinship term system of one language community using a language of another language community. First, I posit inflectional categories of person and number as relevant to kinship terminology. Second, I stipulate the unary predicates of generation, life, and sex; and binary predicates of (non)blood relation, age, clan, co-membership, inheritance, and taboo. Third, I nuance the kinship predicates on consideration of co-sharing (full and partial), negation, converseness, and quasi-relation. What emerges is a generalized kinship formula:

$$a^{\lambda} = P^{\sigma}VS[RAKIT]P^{\tau}VS(b^{\mu})$$

where a, b; λ, μ, P; σ, τ; V, S, R, A, K, I, T are kin variables, personal and numerical indices, generation, generation indices, life, sex, (non)blood relation, age, clan co-membership, inheritance, and taboo respectively.

The problem of using a language of one speech community to discuss the kinship term system of another speech community is the concern of the present paper. The sole objective of this paper is to present and exemplify what is meant to be a universal kinship language. Letting Ω stand for a kinship predicate, we discern one-place and two-place predicates Φ and ∑ respectively as the adjoining diagram shows.
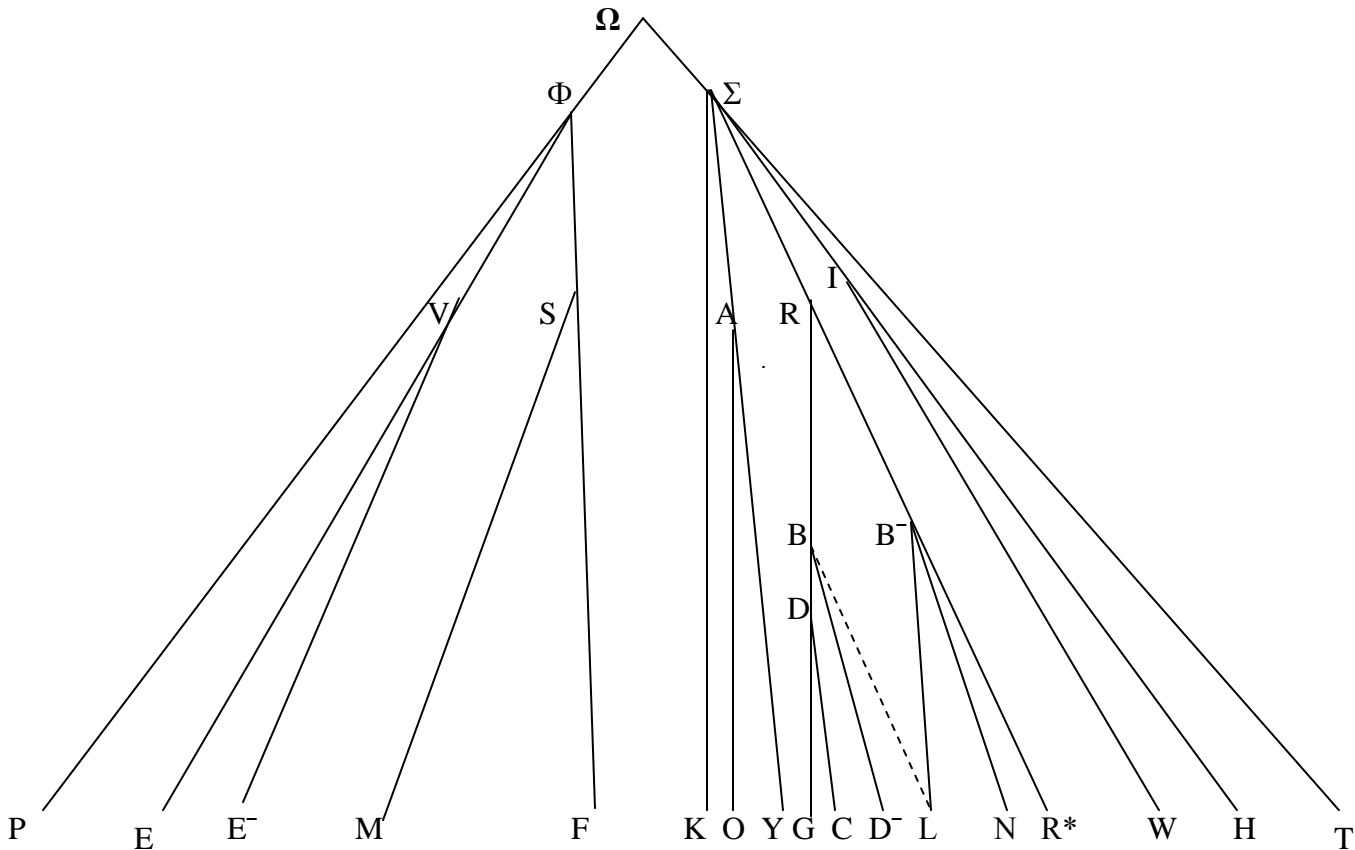
P^σ = df	"_____ is of σ-generation", where σ = …-3, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3, …		
V = df	"_____ is dead or living"		
E = df	"_____ is dead"		
E⁻ = df	"_____ is living"		
S = df	"_____ is male of female"		
M = df	"_____ is male"		
F = df	"_____ is female"		
K = df	"_____ is clansperson of _____"		
A = df	"_____ is older or younger than _____"		
O = df	"_____ is older than _____"		
Y = df	"_____ is younger than _____"		
R = df	"_____ is a relative of _____"		
B = df	"_____ is a blood relative of _____"		

B⁻ = df	"_____ is a non-blood relative of _____"
D = df	"_____ is a direct blood relative of _____"
D⁻ = df	"_____ is an indirect blood relative of _____"
G = df	"_____ is a genitor of _____"
C = df	"_____ is a genetic product of _____"
L = df	"_____ is an affine of _____"
N = df	"_____ is a person divorced from _____"
R* = df	"_____ is a quasi-relative of _____"
I = df	"_____ is a testator or heir of _____"
W = df	"_____ is a testator of _____"
H = df	"_____ is an heir of _____"
T = df	"_____ is a person sexually tabooed to _____"

a, b, c, … , x, y, z = df   kin variables

λ = 1, 1+; 2, 2+; 3, 3+   = df   first person: singular, plural; second person: singular, plural; third person: singular, plural

Ω = df   full co-sharing
Ω^½ = df   partial co-sharing
Ω⁻ = df   negation of Ω
Ω' = df   converse of Ω
Ω* = df   quasi-relation

<u>a</u> is generally related to <u>b</u> such that
a^{λ} = P$^{\sigma}$VS[RAKIT]P$^{\tau}$VS(b$^{\mu}$)

where τ = …, -3, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3, …
        μ = 1, 1+; 2, 2+; 3, 3+

In what follows, [KD□□], [KF□□]; [KL□□], [EL□□], [LL□□] introduce kinship diagram, kinship formula; universal kinship language, English kinship language, and Luganda kinship language sentences respectively.

[KD01]

|	
P^{-4}	a
P^{-3}	b
P^{-2}	c
P^{-1}	d
P^{o}	e
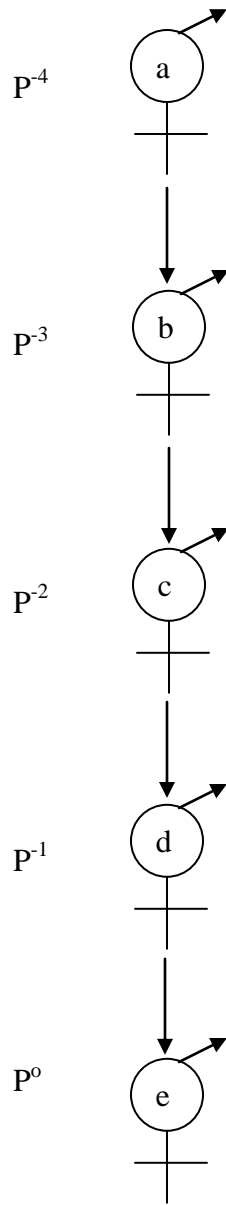
[KF01] $a = P^{-4}SGP^{o}S(e)$

[KL01] a̱ is a previous fourth – generation male or female genitor of a reference–generation male or female e̱.

[EL01] a̱ is a **great-great-grandparent** of e̱.

[LL01] a̱ is **jjajja nnakasatwe** of e̱.

[KF02] $b = P^{-3}SGP^{o}S(e)$

[KL02] <u>b</u> is a previous third – generation male or female genitor of a female <u>e</u>.

[EL02] <u>b</u> is a **great-grandparent** of <u>e</u>.

[LL02] <u>b</u> is **jjajja nnakabilye** of <u>e</u>.

[KF03] $c = P^{-2}SGP^{o}S(e)$

[KL03] <u>c</u> is a previous second-generation male or female genitor of a reference-generation male or female <u>e</u>.

[EL03] <u>c</u> is a **grandparent** of <u>e</u>.
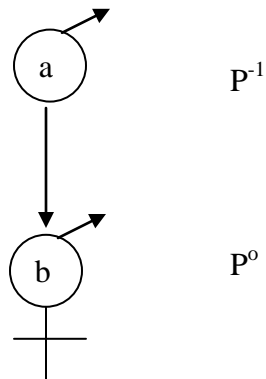
[LL03] <u>c</u> is **jjajja** of <u>e</u>.

[KF04] $d = P^{-1}SGP^{o}S(e)$

[KL04] <u>d</u> is a previous first-generation male or female genitor of a reference-generation male of female <u>e</u>.

[EL04] <u>d</u> is a **parent** of <u>e</u>.

[LL04] <u>d</u> is **omuzadde** of <u>e</u>.

[KD05]
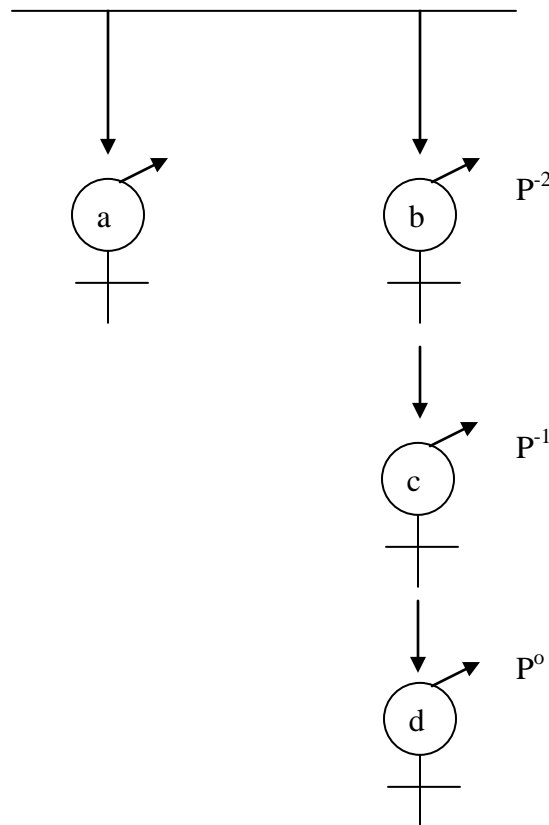
[KF05] $a = P^{-2}SCP^{-2}S(b)GP^oS(d)$

[KL05] <u>a</u> is a previous second-generation male or female genetic co-product of the second-generation male or female <u>b</u> who is a genitor of reference-generation male or female <u>d</u>.

[EL05] <u>a</u> is a **great-uncle** or **–aunt** of <u>d</u>.

[LL05] <u>a</u> is **jjajja** of <u>d</u>.

[KD06]

P^{-1}

P^o

[KF06] $a = P^{-1}MGP^oS(b)$

[KL06] <u>a</u> is a previous first-generation male genitor of the reference-generation male or female <u>b</u>.

[EL06] <u>a</u> is the **father** of <u>b</u>.

[LL06] <u>a</u> is **taata** of <u>b</u>.

[KF07] $a = P^{-1}FGP^oS(b)$

[EL07] <u>a</u> is the **mother** of <u>b</u>.

[LL07] <u>a</u> is **maama** of <u>b</u>.

[KD08]

P^{-1}

P^o
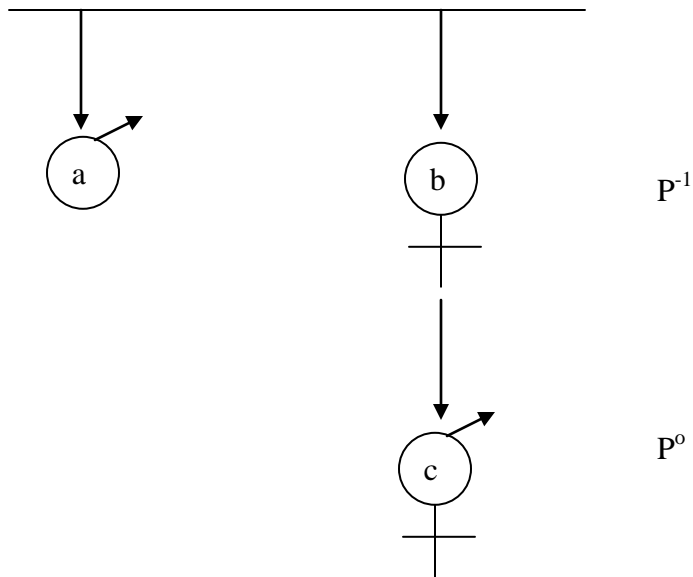
[KF08] $a = P^{-1}M\mathbf{C}F(b)GP^oS(c)$

[EL08] a̱ is a **maternal uncle** of c̱.

[LL08] a̱ is **kojja** of c̱.

[KF09] $a = P^{-1}F\mathbf{C}M(b)GP^oS(c)$

[EL09] a̱ is a **paternal aunt** of c̱.

[LL09] a̱ is **ssenga** of c̱.

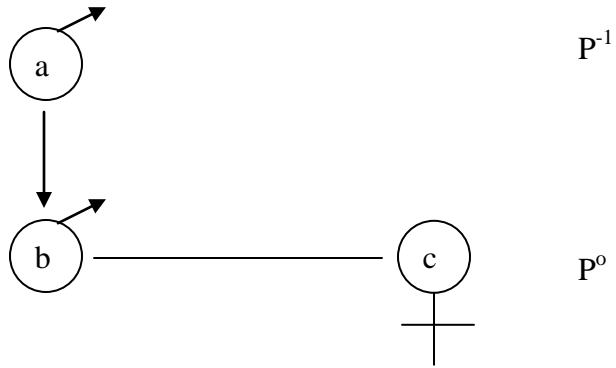[KF10] $a = P^{-1}M\mathbf{C}M(b)GP^oS(c)$

[EL10] a̱ is a **paternal uncle** of c̱.

[LL10] a̱ is **taata omuto** of c̱.

[KF11] $a = P^{-1}F\mathbf{C}F(b)GP^oS(c)$

[EL11] a̱ is a **maternal aunt** of c̱.

{LL11] a̱ is **maama omuto** of c̱.

[KD12]

P^{-1}

P^o

[KF12] $a = P^{-1}MGP^oM(b)LP^oF(c)$

[EL12] a is a **father-in-law** of c.

[LL12] a is **ssezaala** of c.

[KF13] $a = P^{-1}FGP^oM(b)LP^oF(c)$

[EL13] a is a **mother-in-law** of c.

[LL13] a is **nnyazaala** of c.

[KF14] $c = P^oFLP^oM(b)CP^{-1}M(a)$

[EL14] c is a **daughter-in-law** of a.

[LL14] c is **mukaamwana** of a.

[KD15]

P^o

P^{+1}

P^{+2}
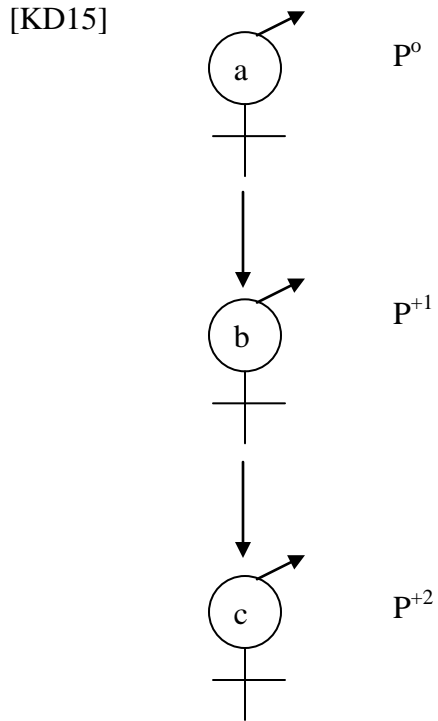
[KF15] $c = P^{+2}SCP^oS(a)$

[KL15] <u>c</u> is a following second-generation male or female genetic product of the reference-generation male or female <u>a</u>.

[EL15] <u>c</u> is a **grandchild** of <u>a</u>.

[LL15] <u>c</u> is **omuzzukulu** of <u>a</u>.

[KF16] $b = P^{+1}SCP^oS(a)$ cf. [KD15]

[EL16] <u>b</u> is a **child** of <u>a</u>.

[LL16] <u>b</u> is **omwana** of <u>a</u>.

[KF17] $b = P^{+1}MCP^oS(a)$

[EL17] <u>b</u> is a **son** of <u>a</u>.

[LL17] <u>b</u> is **mutabani** of <u>a</u>.

[KF18] $b = P^{+1}FCP^oS(a)$

[EL18] <u>b</u> is a **daughter** of <u>a</u>.

[LL18] <u>b</u> is **muwala** of <u>a</u>.

[KF19] $c = P^{o}SCP^{-1}F(b)\mathbf{C}P^{-1}M(a)$

[EL19] c̲ is a **nephew** or **niece** of a̲.

[LL19] c̲ is **omujjwa** of a̲.

[KF20] c is $P^{o}MCP^{-1}F(b)\mathbf{C}P^{-1}M(a)$

[EL20] c̲ is a **nephew** of a̲.

[LL20] c̲ is **omujjwa** of a̲.

[KF21] $c = P^{o}FCP^{-1}F(b)\mathbf{C}P^{-1}M(a)$

[EL21] c̲ is a **niece** of a̲.

[LL21] c̲ is **omujjwa** of a̲.

[LL22] a̲ is **omuko** of c̲.

[KD22(a)]
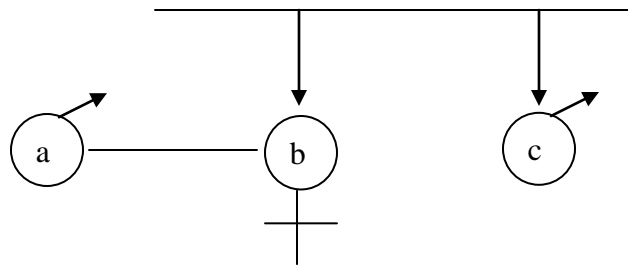
[KD22(b)]

[KD22(c)]

[KF22(a)] $a = P^oMLP^oF(b)\mathbf{C}P^oM(c)$

[KF22(b)] $a = P^oMLP^oF(b)CP^{-1}F(c)$
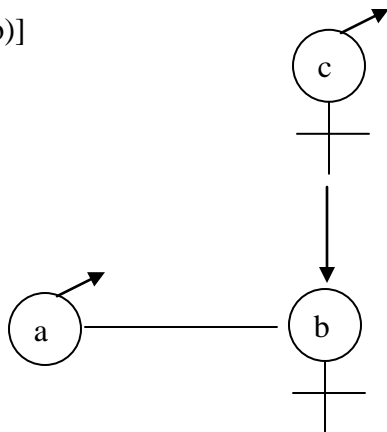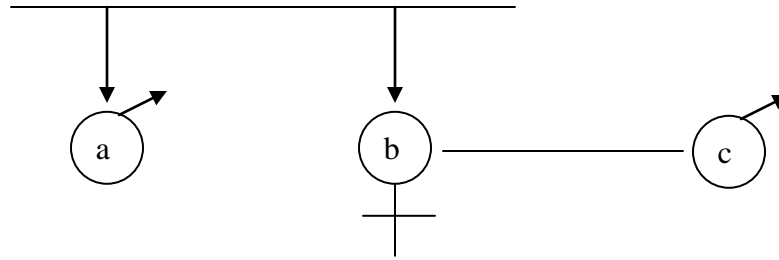
[KF22(c)] $a = P^oM\mathbf{C}P^oF(b)LP^oM(c)$

[EL22(a)] a̲ is a **brother-in-law** of c̲.

[EL22(b)] a̲ is a **son-in-law** of c̲.

[EL22(c)] a̲ is a **brother-in-law** of c̲.

[EL23] a̲ is a **sibling** of b̲.

[KF23] $a = P^oSCP^oS(b)$

[EL24] a̲ is a **brother** of b̲.

[KF24] $a = P^oM\mathbf{C}P^oS(b)$

[EL25] a̲ is a **sister** of b̲.

[KF25] $a = P^oF\mathbf{C}P^oS(b)$

[LL26] a̲ is **mwannyina** of b̲.

[KF26] $a = P^oSCP^oS'(b)$

[LL27] a̲ is **muganda** of b̲.

[KF27] $a = P^oSCP^o\mathbf{S}(b)$

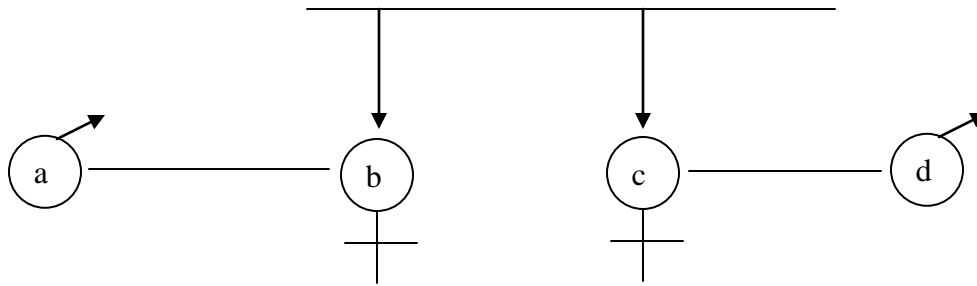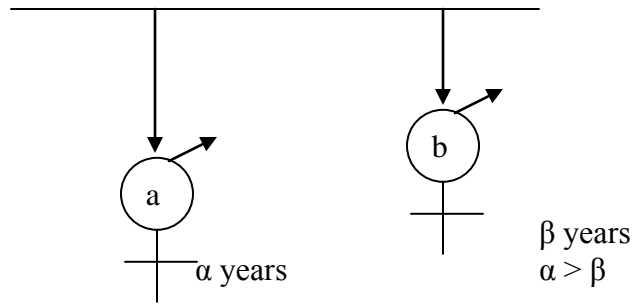[LL28] a̲ is **muggya** of c̲.

[KF28] $a = P^oFLP^oM(b)LP^oF(c)$

[KD28]
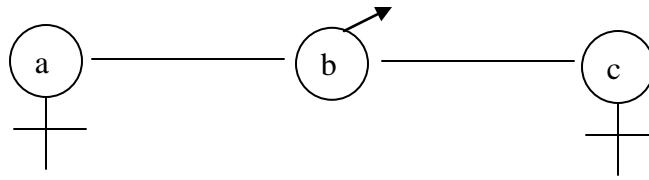
[LL29] a̲ is **musangi** of d̲.
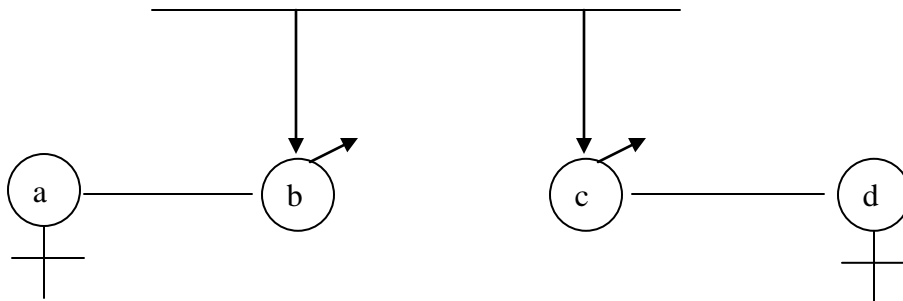
[KF29] a = P°MLP°F(b)**C**P°F(c)LP°M(d)

[KD29]

[KD30(a)]

α years

β years
α > β

[KD30(b)]

[KF30(a)] a = P^{o}S[**OC**]P^{o}S(b)

[KF30(b)] a = P^{o}FLP^{o}M(b)**C**P^{o}M(c)LP^{o}F(d)

[LL30(a)] <u>a</u> is **baaba** of <u>b</u>.
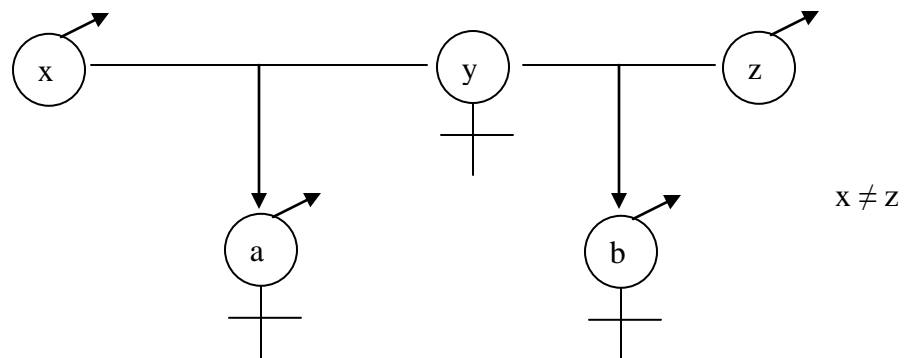
[LL30(b)] <u>a</u> is **baaba** of <u>d</u>.

[KF31] b^3 = P^{o}S[**YC**]P^{o}S(a^1)

[EL31] <u>b</u> is a **younger sibling** of me <u>a</u>.

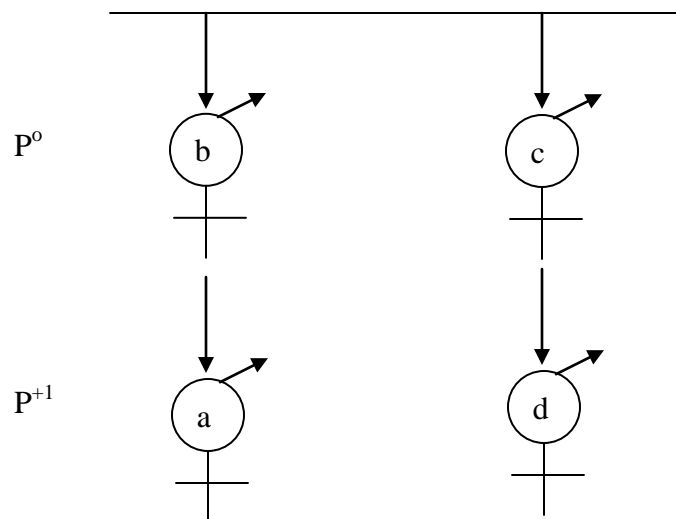[LL31] <u>b</u> is **mwanawattu** of me <u>a</u>.

[KD32]

x ≠ z

[KF32] a = P^{+1}S**C**^{½}P^{+1}S(b)CP^{o}F(y)GP^{+1}S(a)

[LL32] <u>a</u> is **omubbeele** of <u>b</u>.
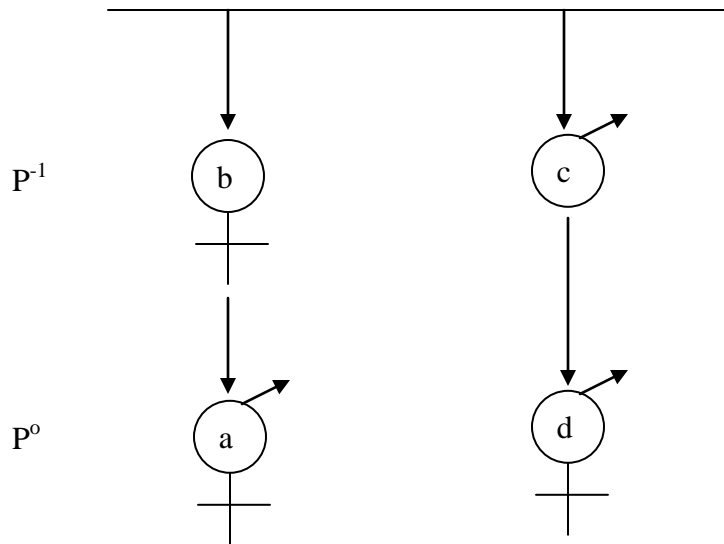
[EL32] <u>a</u> is a **maternal half-sibling** of <u>b</u>.

[KD33]

[KF33] $a = P^{+1}SCP^oS(b)\mathbf{C}P^oS(c)GP^{+1}S(d)$
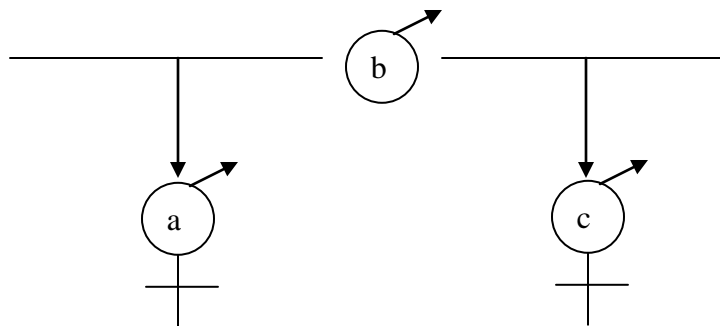
[EL33] a̲ is a **first cousin** of d̲.

[KD34]

P^{-1} b   c

P^o a   d

[KF34] $a = P^oSCP^{-1}F(b)\mathbf{C}P^{-1}M(c)GP^oS'(d)$

[LL34] a̲ is **kizibwe** of d̲.

In Kiganda culture [KF35] holds.

[KF35] $a = P^oSCP^{-1}F(b)\mathbf{C}P^{-1}M(c)GP^oS'(d) \rightarrow a = STS'(d)$

[KD36]

b

a   c

[KF36] $a = P^oSC^{\frac{1}{2}}P^oS(c)CP^{-1}M(b)GP^oS(a)$

[EL36] a̲ is a **paternal half-sibling** of c̲.

[LL36] a̲ is **muganda** or **mwannyina** of c̲. cf. [LL26-27]
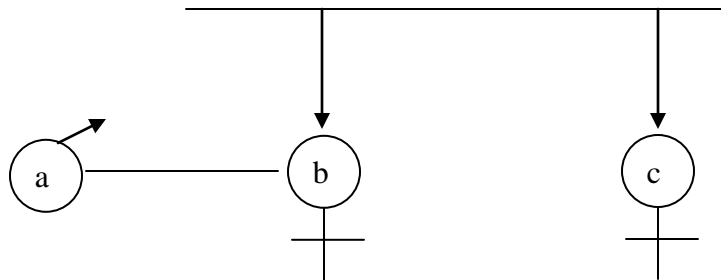
[EL37] a̲ is a **stepchild** of c̲.

[KD37]

[KF37] a = P°SCP⁻¹S(b)LP⁻¹S'(c)G⁻ P°S(a)

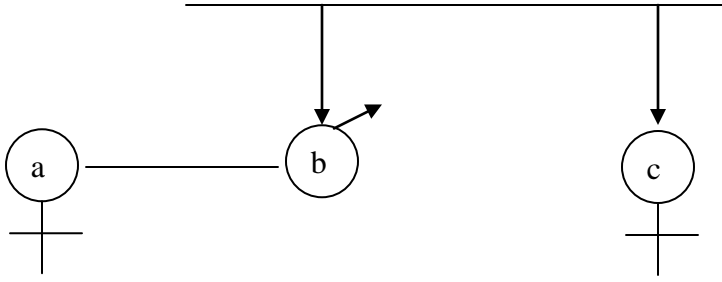[EL37] a̲ is a **stepchild** of c̲.

[LL38] a̲ is **mulamu** of c̲.

[KD38(a)]

[KF38(a)] a = P°MLP°F(b)**C**P°F(c)

[EL38(a)] a̲ is a **brother-in-law** of c̲.

16

[KD38(b)]

[KF38(b)] $a = P^oFLP^oM(b)\mathbf{C}P^oS(c)$

[EL38(b)] <u>a</u> is a **sister-in-law** of <u>c</u>.

In Kiganda culture [KF39 – 40] hold.

[KF39(a)] $a = P^oMLP^oF(b) \rightarrow a = P^oMK^-P^oF(b)$

[KF39(b)] $c = P^{+1}SCP^oM(a) \rightarrow c = P^{+1}SKP^oM(a)$

[KF40] $a = P^\sigma E^-SIP^\tau E^-S(b) \rightarrow a = P^\sigma E^-SKP^\tau E^-\ \mathbf{S}(b)$

[KF41] $a = P^oMNP^oF(b)$

[EL41] <u>a</u> is **divorced** from <u>b</u>.

[LL41] <u>a</u> and <u>b</u> are **bagattulule**.

[KF42] $a = P^oSC*P^{-1}S(b)$

[EL42] <u>a</u> is an **adopted child** of <u>b</u>.

[LL42] <u>a</u> is **omwebonanye** of <u>b</u>.

In concluding this paper, I wish to conjecture that the formula
$a^\lambda = P^\sigma VS[RAKIT]P^\tau VS(b^\mu)$ could play an appreciable role in the development of a general theory of kinship terminology. I hypothesize the following rule of kinship terminology:

[KR01] $a \sim b, b = \varphi(c) \ \vdash a = \varphi(c)$

where $\sim$ and φ represent substitutability and functionality.

Consider the examples in [43] – [47] for Luganda.

[KD43]

[KF43(a)] $a = P^oMWP^oM(b)$
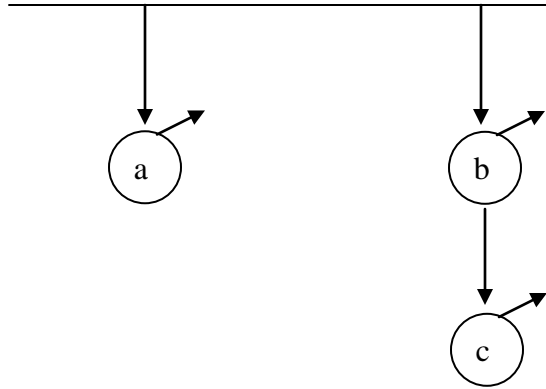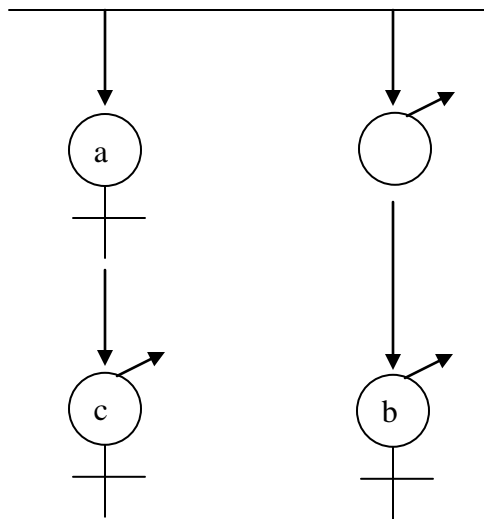
[KF43(b)] $b = P^oMGP^{+1}M(c)$

[LL43(a)] <u>a</u> is **omulaamizi** of <u>b</u>.

[LL43(b)] <u>b</u> is **taata** of <u>c</u>.

[LL43(c)] <u>a</u> is **taata** of <u>c</u>.
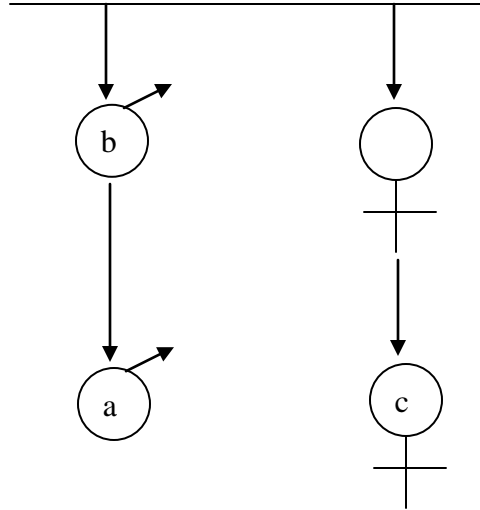
[KD44]

[KF44(a)] $a = P^oFWP^{+1}F(b)$

[KF44(b)] $a = P^oFGP^{+1}S(c)$

[LL44(a)] <u>a</u> is **omulaamizi** of <u>b</u>.

[LL44(b)] <u>a</u> is **maama** of <u>c</u>.

[LL44(c)] <u>b</u> is **maama** of <u>c</u>.

[KD45]

[KF45(a)] a = P^{+1}MHP^{o}M(b)

[KF45(b)] b = P^{o}MTP^{+1}F(c)

[LL45(a)] <u>a</u> is **omusika** of <u>b</u>.

[LL45(b)] <u>b</u> is **azila** to <u>c</u>.

[LL45(c)] <u>a</u> is **azila** to <u>c</u>.

[KF46(a)] a = P$^{\sigma}$SKP$^{\tau}$S(b)

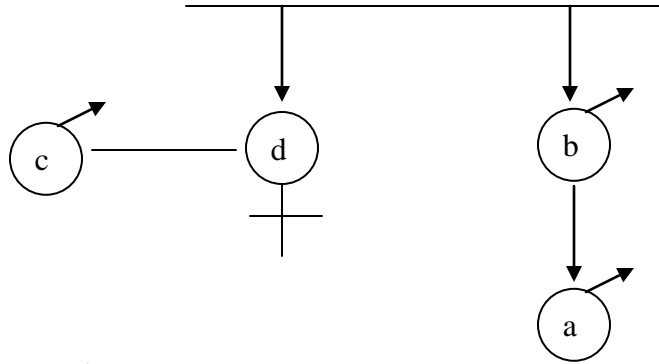[KF46(b)] b = P$^{\tau}$STP$^{\rho}$S(c)

[LL46(a)] <u>a</u> is **munnakika** of <u>b</u>.

[LL46(b)] <u>b</u> is **azila** to <u>c</u>.

[LL46(c)] <u>a</u> is **azila** to <u>c</u>.

[KD47]

[KF47(a)] $a = P^{+1}MHP^oM(b)$

[KF47(b)] $b = P^oMCP^oF(d)LP^oM(c)$

[LL47(a)] a is **omusika** of b.
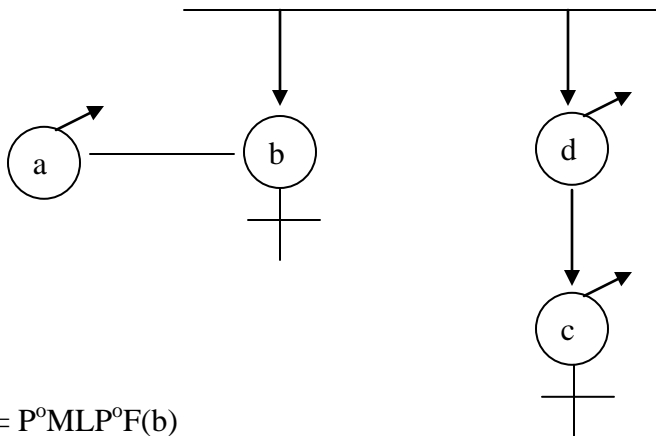
[LL47(b)] b is **omuko** of c.

[LL47(c)] a is **omuko** of c.

[KR02] a $\left(\,_{+}\,\right)$ b, b = φ(c) ⊢ a = φ(c)

where $\left(\,_{+}\,\right)$ represents affinity.

[KR02] is exemplified in [48]

[KD48]

[KF48(a)] $a = P^oMLP^oF(b)$

[KF48(b)] $b = P^oFCP^oM(d)GP^{+1}S(c)$

[EL48(a)] a is the **husband** of b.

[EL48(b)] <u>b</u> is an **aunt** of <u>c</u>.

[EL48(c)] <u>a</u> is an **uncle** of <u>c</u>.

The formal kinship language developed in this paper should be regarded as only tentative, for we are absolutely not certain whether all predicates relevant to kinship terminology have been exhausted. Nevertheless, whether provisional or not, the language promises to be a powerful instrument for analyzing kinship nomenclatural systems of various languages.

By interpreting ~ as inheritance or as clan membership predicate and by applying [KR01], we can understand apparently extended applications of kinship terms as in [LL44(c)], [LL45(c)] and [LL47(c)] in Luganda. For English [KR02] suggests as a rule of kinship terminology or, rather, nomenclature.