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Tabaq Kinship Terms

Khaleel Ismail

1. Introduction

The Tabaq people who call themselves ṭààní live in the western fringe of the Nuba Mountains, neighboring the linguistically un-related Tima (north), Tulishi (south east), and related Abu Jinuk (north west). Compared to other related language groups in the Nuba Mountains, the conquest by the Tabaq people of their present area is recent and still kept in memory. As their area was occupied by the Turuj people, the Tabaq drove them out before settling there. This event is put at ca. 1755–6.[1] The Tabaq people are considered the smallest group in the area. The exact number of its native speakers is unknown due to migration and displacement because of the ongoing war, started in the Nuba Mountains in 1989 between the SPLM/A[2] and the government forces, that caused many people to leave their villages and go to cities and big towns for security and better services.

Moreover, the Nuba Mountains are an area where diverse languages are spoken, with the Arabic language serving as a lingua franca among different ethnic groups, including Tabaq. However, nowadays Arabic is widely spreading and becoming a mother tongue for many people of the young generation, especially those who are growing up in the cities. Nuba people in general have started to abandon their own native languages in favor of Arabic for a number of reasons: they have left their homelands for cities where Arabic is the only medium of communication, and their sociocultural

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1 STEVENSON, *The Nuba People of Kordofan Province,* p. 38.
2 Abbreviations: B – brother; BC – brother's child; BD – brother's daughter; C – child; D – daughter; DIM – diminutive; F – father; FB – father's brother; FBC – father's brother's child; FBD – father's brother's daughter; FC – father's child; FM – father's mother; FW – father's wife; FSL – father's sibling; FZ – father's sister; FZC – father's sister's child; FZD – father's sister's daughter; G – Grandchild; GD – granddaughter; M – mother; MB – mother's brother; MBD – mother's brother's daughter; MBS – mother's brother's son; MM – mother's mother; MZ – mother's sister; MSL – mother's sibling; MZD – mother's sister's daughter; MZS – mother's sister's son; PL – plural; SL – sibling; SLC – sibling's child; SG – singular; SPLM/A – Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army; Z – sister; ZC – sister's child; ZD – sister's daughter.

and religious orientation and the attitude towards their own native languages has witnessed a great change over the last three decades. As a result many languages are at the fringe of endangerment. So, looking at the small number of the speakers, because of the above mentioned factors and the fact that Tabaq people in general are few in number, Tabaq is considered to be an endangered Kordofan Nubian language.

This paper aims at investigating the Tabaq kinship system from an ethnolinguistic view point. It probes the nature of kinship terms and what are the possible morphological processes associated with them.

Lavenda and Schultz have defined kinship systems as, "[t]he various systems of social organization that societies have constructed on principles derived from the universal human experiences of mating, birth, and nurturance."[3] According to Franchetto,

> kinship terminology is the key area of ethnographic enquiry. These terms denote positions in a genealogical structure, associated with multiple denotata. The determination of kin relationships is influenced by many variables, such as genealogical distance and proximity [...]. A systemic analysis of kinship terminology must include a precise indication of the position covered by each term in a genealogical structure, using vocabulary or abbreviations currently used in anthropology.[4]

Thus, kinship terms usually play a great role in studying the culture and the ethnolinguistic factors that form the social hierarchy of a specific community. That is, by studying kinship terms in Tabaq, it is hoped to draw conclusions about the proper positioning of social relations and genealogical structure in terms of distance and proximity as indicated by Franchetto in the above quotation.

As stated by Ayling in his study on the importance of kinship in the development of anthropological theory, "[k]inship can be thought of as consisting of a) the vertical relationships between generations – descent; b) the links between brothers and sisters – siblingship; and c) links by and through marriage – affinity."[5] All three points will be addressed in this paper on Tabaq.

In Tabaq, the idea of a ʃáàlí "family," i.e. people living in one compound, includes descent, íṭà "siblingship," i.e. brothers and sisters, and the kέέr "affinity" or "marriage relation." This is simply because the Tabaq community is a very welcoming society, and whoever lives

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3   LAVENDA & SCHULTZ, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 138.
4   FRANCHETTO, "Ethnography in Language Documentation," p. 187.
5   AYLING, "Why Has Kinship Been So Important in the Development of Anthropological Theory?," pp. 1–2.

in a house or a compound with a family is considered a ʃáàlnìdʊ̀, i.e. a member of that family.

Moreover, as Bonvillain writes, "speakers can signal social meanings of intimacy, solidarity, or deference towards co-participants by extending kinship terms as address forms of nonkin."[6] Thus, as we will see in the Tabaq case, whatever the terms chosen, it is mandatory for the junior relative to address his or her senior by a kin term both reflecting respect and social hierarchy. This implied respect of the social hierarchy is exemplified in linguistic practices of the addresser, which, according to Blum, is "consistent with cultural models or prototypes of the valued relationship between benevolent older kin who take care of the younger ones, who reciprocate with affection [and] later in life with care."[7]

2. Tabaq kinship terminology

From a lexical point of view, in Tabaq, kinship terms are divided mainly into two groups: kinship terms in which a single word is used to refer to a kin relation, and compound descriptive kinship terms where two or more kinship terms are combined together in order to refer to a kin relation. These kinship terms are of three semantic types: terms referring to blood relations, terms referring to affinal relation (marriage relations), and terms referring to other social relations and stages of life. These three types are discussed in the next sections.

Thus, kinship relations are usually marked by kinship terms. In Tabaq, áfá "father," t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ "child," áɲá "father's sister," etc., all constitute different kinship terms. Depending on the specific case, a kin term may cover more than one kinship relation, as with the term màà which refers to both the biological mother and the maternal aunt.

2.1 Terms referring to blood relations

The Tabaq people classify all the blood relations into two main groups: íkʊ́ní, relations of the paternal side and kʊ́rí, relations of the maternal side, with the áfá "father" being the base of reference on the paternal side and the màà "mother" being the base of reference on the maternal side. In the Tabaq language, as in other related Nubian languages, there is a set of terms which are used to refer to or address kin relations.

Tabaq's conversion to Islam over the last century has been a great influence in their culture and social milieu. As a result, almost all

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6   Bonvillain, *Language, Culture, and Communication*, p. 86.
7   Blum, "Naming Practices and the Power of Words in China," p. 372.

Tabaq names have been replaced by Arabic Islamic names, and the Arabic naming system is now fully adopted by Tabaq people. Consequently, children in general (irrespective of the gender) are named with reference to their father's side, i.e., the second name is the biological father's name. One may add as many forefathers' names as can be remembered, as in the Arabic naming system. Usually people can recite four to five names. In her study on the neighboring unrelated Tima language, Schneider-Blum mentions that "[b]lood relationship in this ethnic group is highly valued. When, e.g., seeing a hitherto unknown child for the first time, the question after the name is inevitably followed by the question after the parents, to be able to place the child correctly into the context of the whole kinship system of the Tima."[8] The same applies to Tabaq. The following table presents the basic blood relationship terms.

Table 1. Terms referring to blood relations

Tabaq	abbrev.	gloss
áfá	F	father
màà	M, FW, MZ	mother, father's wife, maternal aunt
íṭὲ	SL, B, Z	sibling, brother, sister
ṭɔ̀ɔ̀ḍù	C	child
úṭέ	G	grandchild
ṭîi	MB	maternal uncle
fáàfá	FB	paternal uncle
áɲá	FZ	paternal aunt
wɔ́ɔ	MM, FM, MF, FF	maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather

In Tabaq, people use kinship terms when addressing people senior to themselves, either within their own generation or in ascending generations, even when they are not related by blood. In general, it is disrespectful to address individuals belonging to the older generation by their names. For instance, any old man who is from one's paternal clan who is in the same age as one's father is addressed by the term fáàfá. The term ṭîi is also used for any elderly man from the maternal clan who is roughly in the same age of the biological maternal uncle. The term wɔ́ɔ is used for addressing the maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, and any old woman irrespective of the clan. Moreover, wɔ́ɔ is used to designate the grandfather but in this case the term kɔ̀ṭù, which means "man" and "male," is usually added if someone wants to be more specific about the gender. Also, áɲá "aunt" in Tabaq refers to a sister of one's father, the wife of one's paternal uncle, and a term of respect to any elderly

8   SCHNEIDER-BLUM, "Kinship Terminology in Tima," p. 1

women in the father's clan, who is roughly in the same age of the real paternal aunt. For the maternal aunt there is a different term, màà, as shown in table 1 above. The term màà is used for one's direct mother, one's father's wife, and as a general term of respect for any elderly women from mother's clan. All this is what Ayling means by vertical relationships in the above definition.[9]

In addition to the basic kinship terms, there are descriptive kinship terms which are composed of two or more basic terms. From a morphological point of view, there are two kinds of descriptive kinship terms: either the two lexemes are juxtaposed or they are separated by the genitival linker. The second part of those expressions with juxtaposed lexemes is either ʈɛ́ɛ̀r or kɔ̀ʈʊ̀, which may be glossed as "girl, female" or "man, male," respectively. As shown by Hellwig and Schneider-Blum, ʈɛ́ɛ̀r and kɔ̀ʈʊ̀ oscillate between the word classes of nouns and adjectives.[10] With regard to the descriptive terms presented in table 2, they function as adjectives modifying the preceding nouns.

Tabaq	abbrev.	gloss
ʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛ̀r	D	daughter , lit. child girl
úʈʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛ̀r	GD	granddaughter, lit. grandchild girl
íʈɛ̀–ʈɛ́ɛ̀r	Z	sister, lit. sibling girl
íʈɛ̀–kɔ̀ʈʊ̀	B	brother, lit. sibling man

Table 2. Kinship terms composed of two nouns

By contrast, in the case of genitive constructions there is a genitive marker that links the two terms; both parts are considered nouns, as shown in table 3.

Tabaq	abbrev.	gloss
áfá–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ [áfánd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀] father-GEN-child	FC	paternal half-sister, paternal half-brother
àfá–n–íld̪ú father-GEN-woman	FW	father's wife
fáàfá–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ [fáàfánd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀] father.brother-GEN-child	FBC	cousin from father's side
fáàfá–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛ̀r [fáàfánd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛ̀r] father.brother-GEN-child-girl	FBD	female cousin from father's side
ʈíì–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–kɔ̀ʈʊ̀ [ʈîind̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪úkɔ́ʈʊ̄] mother.brother-GEN-child-man	MBS	male cousin from mother's side
ʈíì–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛ̀r [ʈîind̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛ̀r] mother.brother-GEN-child-girl	MBD	female cousin from mother's side

Table 3. Descriptive kinship terms in genitive constructions

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9 See fn. 4.
10 Hellwig & Schneider-Blum, "There Is More Than One Way That Leads to Rome, Or: How to Convey Properties in Tabaq."

Tabaq	abbrev.	gloss
áɲá–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ [áɲánd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀] father.sister-GEN-child	FZC	paternal aunt's child
áɲá–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛr [áɲánd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛr] father.sister-GEN-child-girl	FZD	paternal aunt's daughter
màà–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–kɔ̀ʈʊ̀ [màànd̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀kɔ̀ʈʊ̀] mother.sister-GEN-child-man	MZS	maternal aunt's son
màà–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛr [màànd̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛr] mother.sister-GEN-child-girl	MZD	maternal aunt's daughter
kútú–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ [kútúnd̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀] female.sexual.organ-GEN-child	ZC	sister's child
kútú–n–ʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛr [kútúnd̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛr] female.sexual.organ-GEN-child-girl	ZD	sister's daughter
íʈɛ̀–n–ʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ [íʈɛnd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀] sibling-GEN-child	BC, ZC[11]	sibling's child
íʈɛ̀–n–ʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀–ʈɛ́ɛr [íʈɛnd̪ɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛr] sibling-GEN-child-girl	BD, ZD	sibling's daughter
áfá–n–íʈɛ̀–à [áfáníʈà] father-GEN-sibling-PL	FSL	father's siblings
màà–n–íʈɛ̀–à [mààníʈà] mother-GEN-sibling-PL	MSL	mother's siblings

In Tabaq there are a number of descriptive terms, fáàfánʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ "father's brother's child," ʈîìnʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ "mother's brother's child," áɲánʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ "father's sister's child," màànʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ "mother's sister's child." These terms can each be modified by ʈɛ́ɛr "girl, female" or kɔ̀ʈʊ̀ "man, male," which specify the gender if the speaker wants to be more specific, i.e. fáàfánʈɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ʈɛ́ɛr "father's brother's daughter," ʈîìnʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀kɔ̀ʈʊ̀ "mother's brother's son," etc.

Father's siblings' children, i.e., áɲánʈɔ̀ɔ̀ɲì "paternal aunt's children" and fáàfánʈɔ̀ɔ̀ɲì "paternal uncle's children," feel a special responsibility and respect towards each other, as well as mother's siblings' children, màànʈɔ́ɔ́ɲì "maternal aunt's children" and ʈîìnʈɔ́ɔ́ɲì "maternal uncle's children." It is possible to address all paternal uncles' children, maternal uncles' children, paternal aunts' children, and maternal aunts' children as ìʈà "brothers and sisters." However, if you want to be very specific, then you refer to them by their special descriptive kin terms. According to Ayling, these terms designate siblingship, i.e. the relationship between brothers and sisters, as stated at the beginning of this paper.

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11 The term íʈɛ̀–n–ʈɔ̀ɔ̀d̪ʊ̀ can be applied to both male and female cousins, but most of the time when you use it you mean the male cousin.

2.2 Affinal kin relations

Affinal relationships are "culturally defined connections based on marriage."[12] Affinity, which refers to the relationship between kɛ́ɛ́r "in-laws," is another type of relation within the kinship system in Tabaq, compared to blood relations which include descent relations and siblingship. Table 4 presents Tabaq's affinal terms. The last two terms in that table are descriptive terms consisting of two nouns, kɛ́ɛ́r and another noun specifying the gender, kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀ "man, male" or íl̪d̪ʊ́ "woman, female" just as in table 2 above, whereas the rest are single nouns. Some kinship terms carry more than one meaning, such as kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀ "male, man" and "husband" and íl̪d̪ʊ́ "woman, wife," and "female," as shown in table 4 below.

Tabaq	gloss
kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀	man, male, husband
íl̪d̪ʊ́	wife, woman, female
kɛ́ɛ́r	in-law
ʊ́là	brother-in-law
wád̪á	father-in-law
bìd̪ù	co-wife
kɛ́ɛ́r–kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀	brother-in-law
kɛ́ɛ́r–íl̪d̪ʊ́	sister-in-law

Table 4. Affinal kin terms

In the last two terms, kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀ and ɪld̪ʊ́ follow the term kɛ́ɛ́r to differentiate between brother-in-law and sister-in-law, since there is no morphological gender differentiation in the language.

2.3 Terms of social relation and stages of life

There are some other terms which refer to social relations and stages of life that are also recognized amongst Tabaq community members.

Tabaq	gloss
àfùnd̪ù	baby child
ánd̪ù	baby girl
t̪ʷàànd̪ʊ̀	infant
fúnd̪ùnd̪ù	last born
ʊ́ʊ̀kwìjà	first born
fít̪ìl	male or female person living in cohabitation
kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀–m–búúr man-GEN-without	divorced woman
ɛ́ɛ́nd̪ù	bride, lit. new

Table 5. Terms designating social relations and stages of life

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12   LAVENDA & SCHULTZ, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 139.

Tabaq	gloss
ɛ̀ɛn̪d̪ʊ̀–ŋ–kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀ [ɛ̀ɛn̪d̪ʊ̀ŋgɔ̀t̪ʊ̀] new-GEN-man	bride-groom

The first three terms in table 5 designate a children's stages of life; the two following refer to the sequence of birth, whereas the last four indicate social relations. There are some few cases in which children are referred to according to their social status, such as kúmún̪t̪ɔ́ɔ́d̪ʊ̀ "adopted child."

3. Address terms versus reference terms

Generally, the address term with which someone speaks to or addresses his relatives is usually undifferentiated from the reference term with which one speaks about or refers to his kin. However, a possessive prefix is usually added before that term.

Table 6. Reference vs. address terms

address term	reference term example	gloss
fáàfá	à–n–fáàfá [àmbáàfá]	my paternal uncle
áɲá	tìì–n–áɲá	their paternal aunt
t̪ìì	t̪ɛ̀–n–t̪ìì [t̪ɛ̀ndìì]	his/her maternal uncle
kɛ́ɛ́r	wùù–n–kɛ́ɛ́r [wùùŋgɛ́ɛ́r]	your (PL) in-law
màà	ʊ̀ʊ̀–n–màà	our mother

4. Morphology of kinship terms in Tabaq

Jonsson claims that

> [w]ith few exceptions, the grammatical properties of kin terms have been only briefly touched upon in the literature, either as supplementary information in anthropological or pragmatic studies on kin terms, or in linguistic studies on possession where kin terms are mentioned as a group of NPs that, when expressing the possessee, show up in inalienable possessive constructions in many languages.[13]

> However, while kin term studies are common in anthropology, where the focus is on the cultural and social aspects of kinship systems and the meaning of kin terms, they are much less so in linguistics. And the works that have as their main topic the grammatical properties of kin terms are quite few.[14]

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13 Jonsson, *Some Grammatical Properties of Samoan Kin Terms*, p. 12.
14 Ibid., p. 1.

Having presented single lexemes and compound descriptive terms of the kinship system of Tabaq, I will now concentrate on the morphological properties of them.

4.1 *Number marking of kinship terms*

Morphologically, there are some inflectional possibilities with regard to number marking that are relevant to kinship terms in Tabaq. While some common nouns in Tabaq are marked for singulative or are transnumeral, this is not the case with regard to kinship terms. All number markers on Tabaq kinship terms are suffixes.. The choice of the plural marker is not predictable. There are two number marking patterns, plural suffixes attached to unmarked singular forms and a replacement pattern.

Thus, as shown in table 7, the plural suffixes are [ε, a, ɲa, ɪ, rɪ]; and the singular suffixes are [d̪ʊ, ε, t̪ʊ]. Moreover, a replacement pattern is also attested for Tabaq kinship terms. Dimmendaal defines the replacement marking as a pattern "whereby both the singular and the plural are marked for number."[15] Table 7 shows two patterns, plural marking (pl.) as well as the replacement pattern (repl.).

SG	suffix	PL	suffix	pattern	gloss
áfá		áfá–έ	–ε	pl.	father
t̪íɪ̀		t̪ì–á [t̪ìʲá]	–a	pl.	maternal uncle
wàd̪à		wád̪á–ɲá	–ɲa	pl.	father-in-law
út̪ʊ̀		út̪ʊ́–ɲá	–ɲa	pl.	grandchild
íl–d̪ʊ́	–d̪ʊ	íl–í	–ɪ	repl.	wife, woman
t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–d̪ʊ̀	–d̪ʊ	t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí	–ɲɪ	repl.	child, son
ít̪–ὲ	–ε	ít̪–à	–a	repl.	sibling
kɔ̀–t̪ʊ̀	–t̪ʊ	kɔ̀–rí	–rɪ	repl.	husband

Table 7. Number marking of single kin terms

The above table includes only the basic kinship terms. Descriptive kinship terms are quite different both in respect to the general construction and the placement of the plural markers. Descriptive kinship terms are either expressed by genitive constructions marked by the genitive marker –n– or two juxtaposed nouns, the second of which is used as a modifier. See table 8 for genitive constructions and table 9 for juxtaposed nouns.

SG	PL	abbrev.	gloss
áfá–n–íl–d̪ʊ́	áfá–n–íl–í	FW	father's wife
father-GEN-wife-SG	father-GEN-wife-PL		

Table 8. Number marking of kin terms expressed by genitive constructions

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15 DIMMENDAAL, "Number Marking and Noun Categorization in Nilo-Saharan Languages," p. 214.

SG	PL	abbrev.	gloss
ít̪–ɛ–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–d̪ʊ̀ sibling-SG-GEN-child-SG	ìt̪–à–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí sibling-PL-GEN-child-PL	SLC	sibling's child
fáàfá–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–d̪ʊ̀ paternal.uncle-GEN-child-SG	fáàfá–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí paternal.uncle-GEN-child-PL	FBC	paternal uncle's child (cousin)
màà–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–d̪ʊ̀ maternal.aunt-GEN-child-SG	màà–n–t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí maternal.aunt-GEN-child-PL	MZC	maternal aunt's child (cousin)

Thus, as shown in table 8 above, in genitive constructions, the possessor precedes the possessee. Number can be marked both on the noun representing the possessor and the noun representing the possessee. Sometimes only the possessee is marked for number, as in the first example, and sometimes both the possessor and the possessee are marked for number. One can speak about "sibling's children" or "siblings' children," and "uncle's children" or "uncles' children," but it is not possible to say "fathers' wives," since one has only one áfá "(real) father." Hence, the possibility of marking both nouns for number is restricted by pragmatics.

However, when there are two juxtaposed nouns the second of which is used as a modifier, both nouns are marked for plural. The second noun agrees in number with the first one.

Table 9. Number marking of kin terms expressed by juxtaposed nouns

SG	PL	gloss
ít̪–ɛ–t̪ɛ̀ɛr sibling-SG-girl	ít̪–á–t̪ìrì sibling-PL-girl.PL	sisters
t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–d̪ʊ̀–t̪ɛ̀ɛr child-SG-girl	t̪ɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí–t̪ìrì child-PL-girl.PL	daughters
wɔ́ɔ́–kɔ̀t̪ʊ̀ grandparent-man	wɔ́ɔ́–ɛ́–kɔ̀–rì grandparent-PL-man-PL	grandfathers

4.2 Diminutive forms of kinship terms

The diminutive is the form of a noun that conveys the slight degree, young age, or small size of the object referred to by that word. With regard to Tabaq kinship terms, the diminutive forms of kin terms are used either to indicate young age, to show endearment or intimacy, or to tease and provoke. Depending on the context, diminutive forms of nouns may carry both negative and positive connotations. In fact, all the Tabaq diminutive forms of kinship terms may carry a negative connotation if the speaker (addresser) wants to tease, underestimate or provoke the addressee. For instance, áfánítɛ̀ndʊ̀,

literally meaning "father's small sibling," does not necessarily mean the younger brother of one's father; it may also be used pejoratively by denigrating him, especially when the addresser and the addressee are in the same age. At the same time this term can be used for endearment. All Tabaq kinship terms can be diminuted.

The diminutive kinship terms are formed by adding the singular suffix -nd̪ʊ to the singular form. The plural forms of these kinship terms are made diminutive by replacing the singular suffix by the plural suffix -nɪ. These markers are highly productive with regard to Tabaq nouns in general. That is, the singular diminutive marker is added to the singular kinship terms and the plural diminutive marker is added to the plural kinship terms, i.e., they come after the singular or plural suffix, respectively, of the basic kinship terms. Some morphophonological processes blur the picture, as is the case of t̪ɛ̀ɛ̀nd̪ʊ̀ "small girl" and t̪ìrì-nɪ́ "small girls," where some morphophonological alterations occur to the root noun which is t̪ɛ́ɛ̀r "girl."

SG	SG dim.	PL	PL dim.	gloss
kɛ́ɛ́r	kɛ́ɛ́r–nd̪ʊ̂ in.law-DIM.SG	kɛ́ɛ́r–à in.law-PL	kɛ̀ɛ̀r–a–nɪ́ in.law-PL-DIM.PL	in-law
úlà	úlà–nd̪ʊ̂ mother. in.law-DIM.SG	úlà–ʲɛ́ mother. in.law-PL	úlà–ʲɛ́–nɪ́ mother. in.law-PL-DIM.PL	mother in-law
wád̪á	wád̪à–nd̪ʊ̂ father.in.law-DIM.SG	wád̪à–ɲà father. in.law-PL	wád̪à–ɲà–nɪ́ father.in.law-PL-DIM.PL	father in-law
t̪ɛ́ɛ̀r	t̪ɛ́ɛ̀nd̪ʊ̀ girl.SG.DIM.SG	t̪ìrì girl.PL	t̪ìrì–nɪ́ girl.PL-DIM.PL	girl
t̪íì	t̪íì–nd̪ʊ̂ maternal. uncle-DIM.SG	t̪ì–à maternal. uncle-PL	t̪ì–à–nɪ́ maternal. uncle-PL-DIM.PL	maternal uncle
àfà–n–ī̪t̪–ɛ̀ father-GEN-sibling-SG	àfà–n–ì̪t̪–ɛ̀–nd̪ʊ̂ father-GEN-sibling-SG-DIM.SG	áfá–n–í̪t̪–à father-GEN-sibling-PL	áfá–n–í̪t̪–à–nɪ́ father-GEN-sibling-PL-DIM.PL	father's sibling

Table 10. Diminutive forms of kinship terms

SG	SG dim.	PL	PL dim.	gloss
fáàfá–n–tɔ̀ɔ̀–dʊ̀ paternal.uncle-GEN-child-SG	fáàfá–n–tɔ̀ɔ̀–dʊ̀–nd̪ʊ̄ paternal.uncle-GEN-child-SG-DIM.SG	fáàfá–n–tɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí paternal.uncle-GEN-child-PL	fáàfá–n–tɔ̀ɔ̀–ɲí–nɪ paternal.uncle-GEN-child-PL-DIM.PL	uncle's child

5. Conclusion

In the preceding sections I have been trying to discuss kinship terms in the Tabaq language ethnolinguistically. Tabaq kinship terms have been addressed from three perspectives, that is, descent blood relations, affinal relations and other social relations to identify the kinship system in the Tabaq community. It has been concluded that kinship terms are generally marked for number. They can also be marked as diminutive. Culturally, the use of kinship terms is usually associated with respect that is based on age variation, social status, and intimacy. Thus, by using a kinship term to a non-relative, the speaker shows his respectful attitude toward the addressee.

As a result, it is found that Tabaq kinship terms play an essential sociocultural role in the Tabaq society. They are considered one of the vivid sets of Tabaq vocabulary reflecting cultural and ethnolinguistic aspects of the Tabaq community. Moreover, using a kinship term usually designates a proper positioning of the addressee in his social stance, showing mutual respect and solidarity, and expressing a defined hierarchy of the interlocutors in Tabaq society.

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