KinQuest

A New Tool for Eliciting and Comparing Kinship Terminologies

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KinQuest is a new and intuitive electronic questionnaire for collecting and organizing lexical data pertaining to kinship, families and relationships.

The project was developed to gather complete kinship terminologies of the Volgaic Finno-Ugric and Turkic language families for cross-linguistic comparison in an organized and natural way.
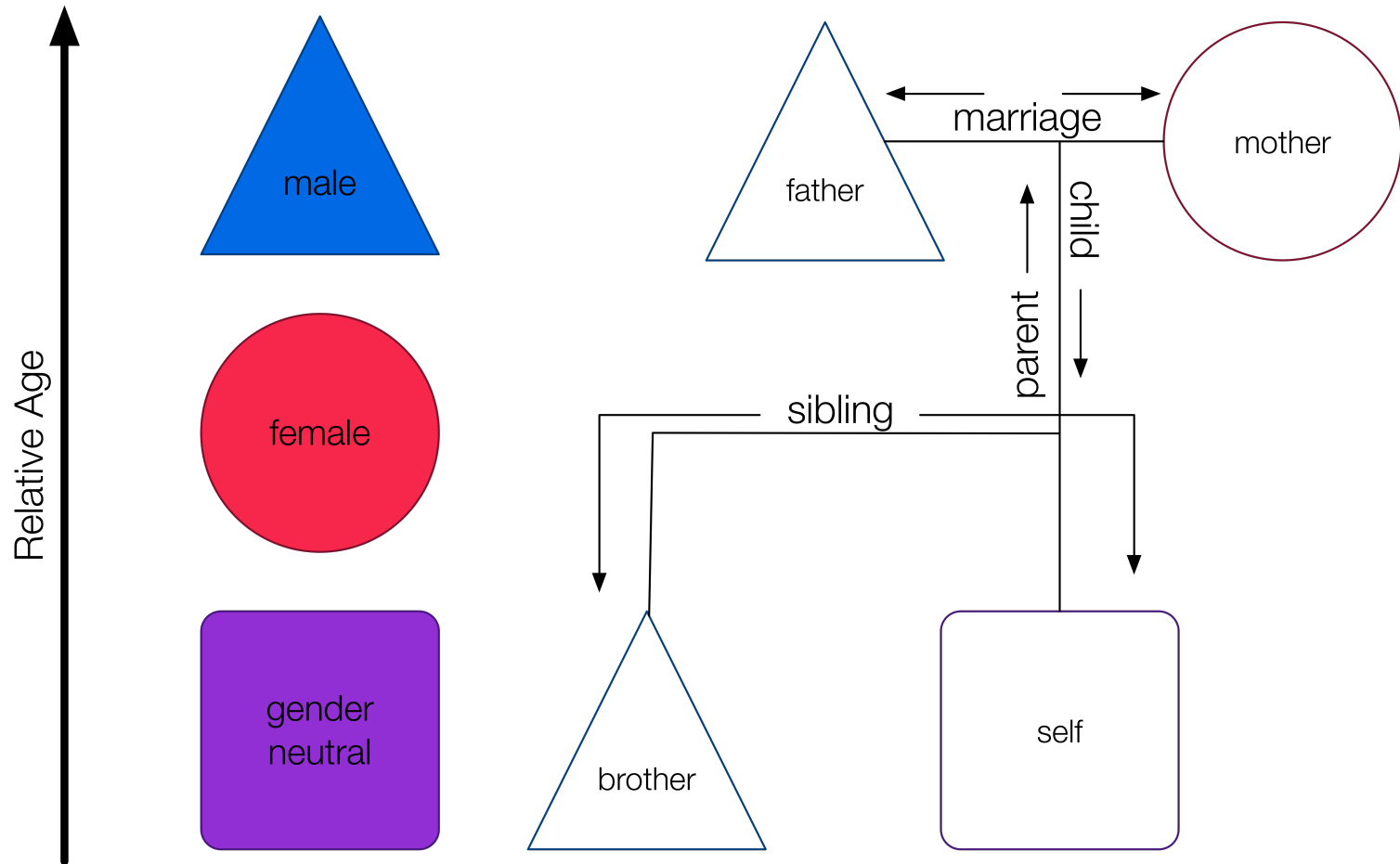
Collecting kinship terms proved difficult as:

- dictionaries were often unreliable and underinformative
  (e.g. multiple terms for *sister* or one term for *older sister* and no term
  for *younger sister*)

- eliciting kinship systems was complicated and difficult
  for both researcher and consultant

The KinQuest questionnaire may be completed by linguists or anthropologists, but was written and designed to be easily understood by non-specialists as well.

The questions flow naturally from parent-type relationships to siblings, on to children and finally affinal relationships.

Each question is supplemented with a unique, easy-to-understand diagram, which exhibits standard colors, shapes, and tree-branching relationship representations with accompanying descriptions and numerical references.
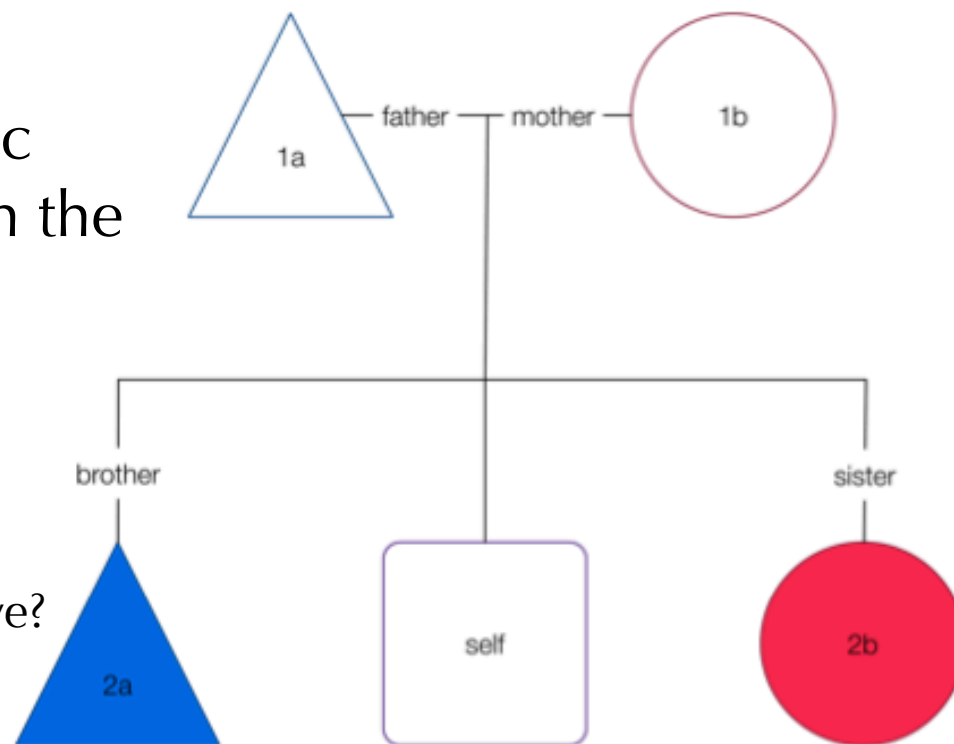
For each elicitation, the respondent is asked for language name, and type/name/region of source of the information.

Language Name   Alutiiq

Source Region   Kodiak Island

Source Type   researcher

Source Name   Julia Fine

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Each section begins by determining the semantic distinctions and collapses in the system:

father —— mother —— 1b

1a

brother

sister

distinguished by gender of relative?

2a

self

2b

In your language, are the most basic terms for
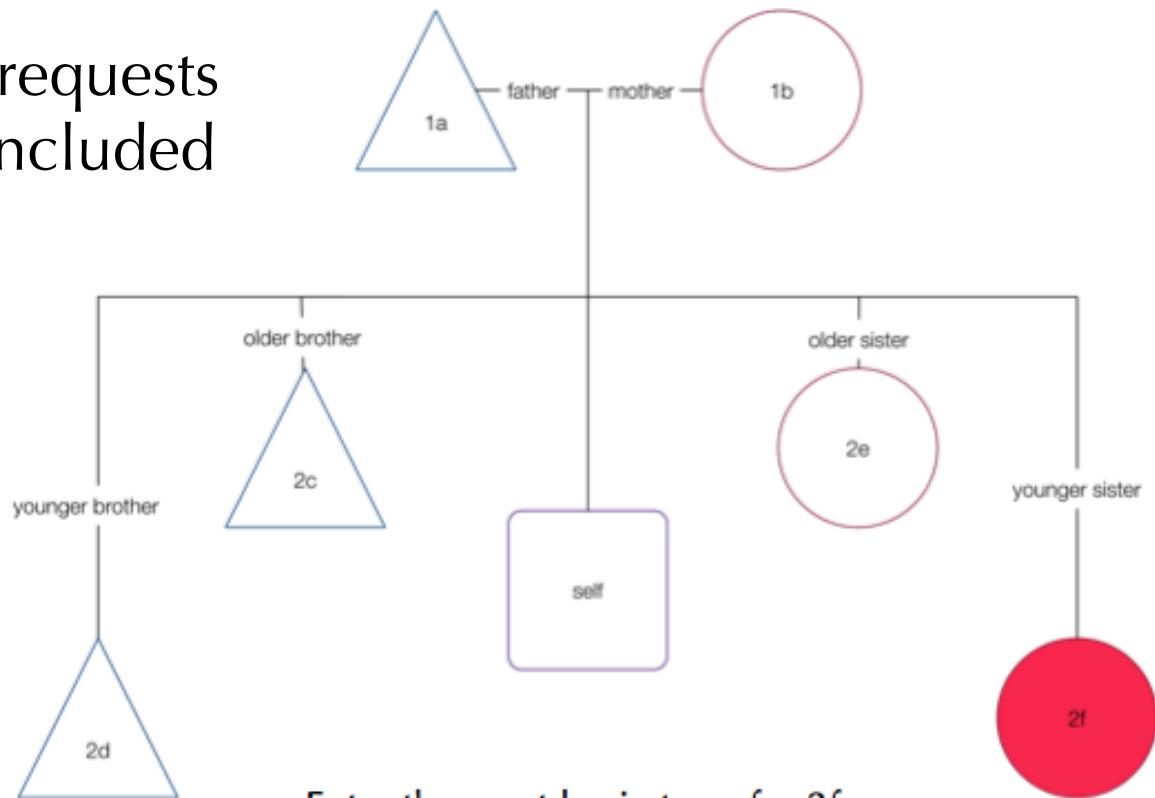**2a** and **2b** the same or different?

same   different

distinguished by gender of ego?

It depends on the gender of the speaker

back

and then systematically requests
terms for each relation included
in the system:

father — mother — 1b

1a

older brother

older sister

2e

2c

younger brother

distinguished by relative age?

self

younger sister

2d

2f

Enter the most basic term for 2f:

or

☐ unknown   ☐ no term   ☐ greater distinction

Is the term unknown? non-existent?
Does it require greater distinction?

Additional Notes:

A space for commentary and informal/
dialectal/regional terms

continue

All terms are organized into a spreadsheet and paired with a relationship code, starting with ego and referencing each intervening relationship.
(e.g. ego's mother's brother's daughter's husband = EMBDH)

Ego
E = ego
Q = male ego
R = female ego

Parents
P = neutral parent
M = male parent
F = female parent

Spouses
A = neutral spouse
H = male spouse
W = female spouse

Children
C = neutral child
S = male child
D = female child

Siblings
G = neutral sibling
B = male sibling
Z = female sibling
I = older male sibling
J = younger male sibling
K = older female sibling
L = younger female sibling
O = older sibling
Y = younger sibling

In this format, we can clearly see how kinship terms (especially sibling relations) are patterned and we can compare the systems on a fine-grained scale.

		English	Russian	French	Hebrew	Chuvash	Turkish	Tamil	Hawaiian	Maori	Korean	Alutiiq	Basque	Salish	Maya
Parents															
	EP *gender neutral parent*	parent	родитель		hore - הורה		ebeveyn				bumonim				
	EF *male parent*	father	отец	père	abba - אבא	атте	baba	ayya	makuakane	matua	abeoji	ata	aita	bad	naa
	EM *female parent*	mother	мать	mère	ima - אמא	анне	anne	atta	makuahini	whaea	eomoni	amaaq	ama	skoi	yum
Siblings															
	EG *gender neutral sibling*	sibling											haurride		
	EB *male sibling*	brother	брать	frère	ax - אח										
	EZ *female sibling*	sister	сестра	sœur	axot - אחות										
	EI *older male sibling*					пичче	abi	annan				anngaq			*zucum
	EJ *younger male sibling*					шăллăм	erkek kardeş	tampi			nam-dongsaeng				
	EK *older female sibling*					аппа	abla	akkal				alqaq			cic
	EL *younger female sibling*					йăмăк	kızkardeş	tankacci			yeo-dongsaeng				
	EO *older sibling*													ska'	
	EY *younger sibling*						kardeş				dongsaeng	uyuwaq		so'qwa	*iɔin
	QB *male's male sibling*												anaia		
	QZ *male's female sibling*								kaikuahine	tuahine			arreba		
	QI *male's older male sibling*								kaikua'ana	tuakana	hyeong				
	QJ *male's younger male sibling*								kaikaina	tēina					
	QK *male's older female sibling*										noona				
	QL *male's younger female sibling*											nayagaq			
	RB *female's male sibling*								kaikuane	tungane			neba		
	RZ *female's female sibling*												ahizpa		
	RI *female's older male sibling*										oppa				
	RJ *female's younger male sibling*											nayagaq			
	RK *female's older female sibling*								kaikua'ana	tuakana	unni				
	RL *female's younger female sibling*								kaikaina	tēina					
Children															
	EC *gender neutral child*	child												bɑ'da	
	ES *male child*	son	сын	fils	ben - בן	ывăл	oğul	makan	keikikane	tama	adul	awaqutaq	seme		*mehen
	ED *female child*	daughter	дочь	fille	bat - בת	хĕр	kız	makal	kaikamahini	tamahine	ddal	paniyaq	alaba		ixmehen
	oldest son					bexor/a - בכור/ה									
	oldest daughter					bexor/a - בכור/ה									
Spouses															
	EA *gender neutral spouse*	spouse					eş								
	EH *male spouse*	husband	муж	mari	ba'al - בעל	упашка	koca			tane	nampyeon	wiik			
	EW *female spouse*	wife	жена	femme	isha - אשה	арăм	karı			wahine	annae	nuliq			

Working with a language that has a fascinating kinship system? Would you like to use this tool to elicit or compare your own language? Let us know!

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