Comparative Study of Kinship Terms in Korean, Hindi and English Languages

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In this article we comparatively study the three languages and cultures. While learning Korean vocabulary I came across so many facts that made me realize how close is my mother tongue Hindi to Korean for example the entire kinship system in Korean and Hindi is in the same way complex. Unlike English, Korean and Hindi share the similar pattern of naming all the relationship from fathers' i.e., paternal and from mothers' side i.e., maternal. While preparing for the topic "the kinship" in initial Korean classes I found this striking similarity and I was amazed. I would like to share the same with you all.

Korean, Hindi, and English are three languages that belong to different language families: Korean is a member of the Koreanic language family, while Hindi is a member of the Indo-Aryan language family. Despite their differences, these languages have unique systems of kinship terms that reflect their respective cultures and societies.

In Korean, kinship terms are based on the relative's age, gender, and status within the family. For example, the term "아버지" (abeoji) means "father" in Korean, while "어머니" (eomeoni) means "mother." Additionally, there are different terms for "older brother" and "younger brother" ("형" [hyeong] and "동생" [dongseng], respectively) and "older sister" and "younger sister" ("누나" [nuna] and "여동생" [yeodongsaeng], respectively). The term "할아버지" (halabeoji) is used for "grandfather," while "할머니" (halmoeoni) is used for "grandmother."

In Hindi, kinship terms are based on the relative's gender and the speaker's generation. For example, the term "पिता" (pita) means "father" in Hindi, while "माता" (mata) means "mother." Additionally, there are different terms for "older brother" and "younger brother" ("भाई" [bhai] and "छोटाभाई" [chhota bhai], respectively) and "older sister" and "younger sister" ("बहन" [behan] and "छोटीबहन" [chhotibehan], respectively). The term "दादा" (dada) is used for "paternal grandfather," while "नाना" (nana) is used for "maternal grandfather." Similarly, "दादी" (dadi) is used for "paternal grandmother," while "नानी" (nani) is used for "maternal grandmother."

In English, kinship terms are based on gender and the relative's position within the family. For example, the term "father" is used for a male parent, while "mother" is used for a female parent. The terms "brother" and "sister" are used for siblings regardless of their age. The terms "grandfather" and "grandmother" are used for the parents of one's parents.

Furthermore, the use of kinship terms in each language reflects the cultural values and customs of their respective societies. For example, in Korean and Hindi culture, respect for elders and the importance of family hierarchy are highly valued. In English-speaking societies, there is a greater emphasis on individualism and less emphasis on family hierarchy.

One major difference between the kinship terms in these languages is the use of different terms for two sides of parents. Father's sides of relatives have different kinship terms and Mother's side different. While Korean and Hindi distinguish between paternal and maternal kinship terms English does not make this distinction.

In English from fathers' and mothers' side their elder brother, younger brother or brother-in-law will be called only uncle but from Hindi and Korean language perspective there is specific name for each kinship.

Kinship System in English	Kinship System in Hindi		Kinship system in Korean	
	Father's Side	Mother's Side	Father's Side	Mother's Side
Grandfather (father's father/mother's father	दादाजी जी	नानाजी जी	친할아버지	외할아버지
Grandmother (father's mother/mother's mother)	दादीजी जी	नानीजी जी	친할머니	외할머니

The cultural values of a country make it civilized and respectable. The culture of India and Korea is among the oldest in the world. Family the smallest unit of the society is so closely knitted in both the cultures. It is very well reflected in the family structure and relationship. Every relation is so exclusive that it is known by a specific name in both Korea and India. Unlike English where uncle can be both father's or mother's elder or younger brother or brother in law. In English further description is required to explain the relation. Such issue is not faced in Hindi and Korean Language. Hence, it makes the relationship status clear in just one word without further description. The family values, respect to elders and love to younger this is what we learn in our families since childhood. So is visible in the Korean families the values and emotions are very well portrayed in Korean dramas. No matter how materialistic we become but true happiness is found in small things we do. Korea and India is an example of a society, which has reached the heights of success but still remains rooted. This is the reason it flourishes and will bear fruits of kindness and humanity in years to come.

Korea other than culture is the beauty of Nature the country is gifted with. Nature has given the country immense beauty so is visible among the people. Korea's achievements and success in different sectors is not just a wonder but really very hard work of its people. Such an honesty and dedication towards one's work and the loyalty towards one's motherland need all the praise. The humble nature among the people requires here special mention. The winners of any competition be it sports or any field always credit their success to the country. Such a patriotism and love towards one's motherland wins anybody's heart.

In conclusion, the kinship terms in Korean, Hindi, and English reflect the unique cultural and social values of each language's respective culture. While there are similarities and differences between the systems, all three languages demonstrate the importance of family and kinship in their cultures

Finally, I would like to conclude my article with the lines from respected Kim Koo (South Korean politician, educator and the sixth prime minister of the Korean independence movement) autobiography "My Desire", "I want our nation to be the most beautiful in the world. By this I do not mean the most powerful nation. Because I have felt the pain of being invaded by another nation, I do not want my nation to invade others. It is sufficient that our wealth makes our lives abundant; it is sufficient that our strength is able to prevent foreign invasions. The only thing that I desire in infinite quantity is the power of a noble culture. This is because the power of culture both makes ourselves happy and gives happiness to others."

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