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Kinship terms in Nkep (East Santo)

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Abstract

This paper reviews the kinship terms (possessive nouns and vocatives) which were elicited during a series of lexicography meetings in Hog Harbour held in 2018-2019. It focuses primarily on the core kinship terms that occur with direct possession morphology but notes some indirectly possessed common noun kinship terms. Some kinship terms are being replaced by Bislama terms in everyday usage. After outlining the kinship system and documenting the traditional terms, the paper comments on the socialisation processes by which children acquire these terms and the changing denotation of kinship terms under the influence of social change, e.g. legislation specifying workers' bereavement leave entitlements for different classes of relatives.

Summary in Bislama

Olgeta man Hog Haba (Vüthiev) oli toktok Nkep. 2018 kasem 2019, oli setemap wan tim blong wokem wan diksoneri blong Nkep from i no gat. Sam man ples oli wantem wan diksoneri longtaem finis mo sam tija tu oli gat nid blong wan from oli wantem tij long Nkep. Taem diksoneri tim i mit oli rikodem plante toktok long langwis. Sam toktok hem i ol nem mo wod blong tokabaot o blong singaotem famle. Long ples ia, yumi save faenem ol wod olsem hemia. I gat sam wod blong tokabaot ol memba blong wan famle, olsem 'papa blong mi' *thnec*, 'sista blong hem' *utian* o *tatein*. I gat sam wod tu blong singaotem famle, olsem 'mama' *ma*, 'boe blong mi' *noovkar* o *kaat*. Olsem ol eksampol ia, yumi save luk se fasin blong tokabaot o singaotem ol memba blong famle i no semak olsem long Inglis o Franis. Long ples ia mifala i putum ol wod we mifala i luksave long taem we mifala i wokem diksoneri blong Nkep. Afta, yumi save tingbaot sam jenis oli gohed naoia. I gat sam man naoia oli yusum Bislama blong tokabaot o singaotem famle blong ol. Be sapos man i toktok olsem ia, man i mas yusum wan difren fasin blong talem se 'blong mi' o 'blong hem'. Ol kastom wod, yumi luk se 'blong mi/blong hem' i stap insaed long wod wantaem: *thnec* be *thenan*. Ol Bislama wod oli difren 'blong mi/hem' i stap afsaed long nem blong famle, olsemia: *papa blong mi*, *papa blong hem*. Long ples ia tu yumi save tingbaot wan bigfala kwestin: Wan pikinini i lanem ol nem blong famle blong hem olsem wanem? Yumi luksave se ol mama mo papa blong hem oli givhan tumas. Oli jenisim toktok blong olgeta, blong pikinini ia i save kopiem.

Keywords

Nkep, kinship terminology, social change, Hog Harbour

1 Introduction

Kinship terminology provides a window into social organisation more clearly than any other aspect of the language does. Like all aspects of social organisation, it is subject to change. This paper describes the core kinship terminology used in Nkep, the language of Hog Harbour (Vüthiev) village on the East Coast of Santo.

Nkep is mutually intelligible with Sakao (ISO: sku), the language associated with speakers in the village of Port Olry. Nkep is sometimes bundled into linguistic discussions with Sakao (Grambank Consortium, 2024) and the exact historical relationship between Sakao and Nkep remains a matter of empirical linguistic and sociolinguistic enquiry. Suffice to say that in the fieldwork I have conducted in Vüthiev since 2011, speakers in Vüthiev/Hog Harbour have been clear that they see their language variety as mutually intelligible with, but sufficiently distinct from, that of speakers in Port Olry that it warrants its own label. The latest version of Glottolog (Hammatrström et al., 2024, perhaps following Touati, 2014) designates Nkep and Sakao as sisters under a postulated umbrella term (proto-language?) *Wanohe*. Whether *wanohe* is the optimal label remains to be seen; in Nkep, *(n)wanoohe*, lit. 'language/talk village/place', can refer to any Ni-Vanuatu language, not just Nkep or Sakao (note that it usually has an initial *n-* nominal prefix and the penultimate vowel is /o/ not /ɔ/; the latter is represented with single <o> in the orthography adopted for teaching purposes). Regardless of what the superordinate language category should be, the representation of Nkep and Sakao as two distinct linguistic systems seems preferable to lumping them together.

The kinship terms reported here were collected in the course of a series of workshops held in Hog Harbour and Lonnoc (Loonooc) villages between 2018-2019. The main purpose of the workshops was to compile a dictionary based on materials already gathered in the course of an ELDP-funded documentation project, and to support primary school teachers trying to use Nkep in Years 1-3, in line with the (then) Vanuatu Government Education policy. Native speaker teachers lacked, for instance, vocabulary that differentiated common curricular activities, such as 'sort', 'arrange' and 'group'. They also wanted to have elders' validation of terms they were using on an ad hoc basis for practices such as 'divide', 'multiply', 'remainder', 'display board'.

The workshop participants were: Manasseh Vocor, Anathiel Loyalty Karpüs, Lidia Wass, Marie Tain Ali, John Turan, Thukula Noel, Wass Iavro, Bob Vocor, George Nial, Ian Prenter and Miriam Meyerhoff. Marie Tain Ali and Shirly Armeren Molisale have continued to provide comments and advice since the workshops.[1] Both reference terms and address terms for kin are discussed. As well as providing documentation of the traditional kinship terms in Nkep, the paper offers some comments on the sociolinguistics associated with children's acquisition of the system. These are based on fieldwork with Nkep speakers in Hog Harbour, Luganville and Port Vila (2011-present). The paper concludes with some comments about the impact of social change on the use of some kinship terms and possible directions of change in the future.

1.1 Typology of kinship

Kinship in Nkep is expressed along Hawaiian (generational) principles. Following Needham (2004, himself citing Lowie, 1917), it is preferable to think in terms of 'principles' for kinship

[1] All the workshop participants gave generously of their time and knowledge. They are not responsible for any errors or misunderstandings on my part. The workshops benefited from the financial support of the Endangered Languages Documentation Project, Victoria University of Wellington and the Sanma Provincial Education Office, and the logistical support of Prenter Primary School, Hotel Santo, Lonnoc Bungalows, Joyce Graham, Peter Hoyle and members of the community of Hog Harbour.

classification, rather than 'systems.' This is because use of kinship terms reflects people's ongoing sense-making of social structure, whereas talk of a 'system' can imply autonomy from social practices. Recent typological work by Passmore et al. (2021) highlights some of the empirical problems with the classic anthropological systems, especially their focus on a small number of key relationships for differentiating systems. Moreover, they also observe that different principles may operate on the lexicalising of relationships in different generations. Needham also proposes that if we think of kinship as being organised on principles rather than in systems, this more readily allows us to incorporate social change into our analysis (as Jourdan 2001 does for kinship terms in Solomon Islands Pidgin).

Under the Hawaiian principles that structure Nkep kinship terminology, siblings of the ego's father and mother are referred to as "mother" and "father". Children of these relatives are all classified as "sisters" and "brothers". Section 2 provides the details for Nkep.

2 Kinship Terms: Reference

Nkep kinship terms are mostly directly possessed, that is, they occur with a possessive suffix that marks person and number directly on the nominal head (Lichtenberk, 2018, Lynch et al., 2002, p. 75). The most common direct possession suffixes are shown in Table 1. They are shown first using the spelling adopted by the Hog Harbour/Vüthiev dictionary team in their workshops. This, in turn, builds on foundational work done by Catriona Hyslop (now, Catriona Malau) in workshops held in 2000 that were funded by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

Table 1. Direct possession suffixes in Nkep

	Singular	Plural
1 excl	-c /-ɣ/	-cam /-ɣam/
1 incl		-r /-r/
		(-rthël /-rðøl/)
2	-m /-m/	-cei /-ɣei/
3	-n /-n/	-ngör /-ŋœr/

The *-rthël* variant for first person inclusive possessives was only provided for two kinship terms: *tierthël* 'our aunty/aunties' and *velierthël* 'our spouses' parents'.

The kinship terms workshopped by the dictionary team are shown in Table 2. The root for each kinship term is provided in Table 2. (The Appendix gives all the inflected forms.)

Table 2. Kinship reference terms in Nkep

Reference term	Relationship(s) indexed
thië-/thiaa-	mother, mother's sister, wife of a father
then-/thna-	father or father's brother
nwalthü-/nwalthö-	child
tatei-	cross-sex sibling (woman's brother; man's sister)
wutie-	woman's sister
mane-/mana-	man's brother
thvü-/thvö-	grandparent
vie-/via-	grandchild
sekle-/sekla-	child of the sister of a man
velye-/velya-	(1) spouse's parent (Bislama 'palika'?) (2) spouse's cross-sex sibling (wife's sister; husband's brother)
nëvtë-/nëvta-	mother's brother
nthvönthü-/nthvönthö-	grandparent of a grandparent ('hem we olfala bubu blong mi i singaotem bubu long hem')
nile-/nila-	family line

Some comments on the data in Table 2: First, the presence/absence of the prefix *n-* on some terms. Most nouns in Nkep occur with a reflex of a historical nominalising prefix **na-* (Clark, 2009) in citation form (unless they are the second element in a compound). However, clearly not all the kinship terms in Table 2 start with *n-*. Clark (2009, p.32) observes that at some point Hog Harbour lost **n-* of the noun prefix "when the following vowel is unstressed." This process may account for the absence of initial *n-* in some of the kinship terms above. The data in Table 2 reflects what was recorded in the workshops. When a kinship term came up for discussion in the workshops, the procedure was as follows: all possessed forms were written on a blackboard for discussion and correction. Participants could decide to record the form with or without the *n-* prefix, and there was long discussion over *velyec~nvelyec.* Some participants had a strong preference for using the alternation to materialise the difference between the taboo relationships known in Bislama as *palika* 'spouse's parent' and *tawean* 'spouse's cross-sex sibling', respectively. Some rejected the difference entirely. (The preference for *n-* prefixing may reflect different frequencies of use. There is widespread use of the Bislama term *tawian (tawi)* in everyday speech in Nkep. It seems plausible that *velyec* 'spouse's parent' is used more than *nvelyec* 'spouse's cross-sex sibling', and for some speakers it makes sense to reflect this higher frequency of use with a phonological reduction.)

A second observation is that discussions and corrections generally focussed on plural forms; kinship terms are more frequently encountered and used in 'my', 'your' and 'her/her' formulations, consequently, workshop participants' intuitions converged with these forms. There was more discussion within the dictionary team about what the canonical first plural inclusive possessive was than there was of any other form. As noted in regard to Table 1, the first person inclusive plural forms occurred twice with *-rthël* as the possessive, rather than *-r*. It is unclear whether this indicates *-rthël* should be analysed as an augmented number form.[2] Ultimately, /ðøl/ must derive from Proto-North-Central Vanuatu **tolu* 'three' (Clark, 2009), cf. modern Nkep /ðøl/ 'three' and this suggests some kind of (originally) augmented number

[2] My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this question.

semantics. Marley (2021) uses careful apparent time analysis of the distribution of possessives in Bininj Kunwok to argue that the unit augmented number marking is giving way to a binary minimal-augmented number distinction. I do not have access to enough tokens of kinship terms in conversational use to undertake a similar analysis (and see §4 on the use of Bislama terminology). Body parts (which are also directly possessed in Nkep) overwhelmingly favour *-r* for first person plural inclusive. The dictionary team had most trouble with these two kinship terms: *velierthël* because there were differences of opinion about what taboo relationship it marked, and *tierthël* was hardly remembered, several members of the team had to go home to workshop this with other members of the community. This might suggest that the morphologically more transparent variant *-rthël* is what speakers default to when the kinship term is less frequently used. This remains an avenue for future research on possessive marking in Nkep.

A third point is that the workshop discussions took place primarily in Bislama. For the record, the actual gloss I was directed to use for *nvelyec* was 'wan man hem i tapu long kastom, olsem brata blong man blong wan woman, sista blong woman blong wan man, tawean' [a person who is tapu according to customary practices, like the brother of a woman's husband, the sister of a man's wife]. The gloss provided for *nilec* was 'famle mo ol bubu blong bifo blong wan man o woman' [family and ancestors of a man or woman]. I neglected to clarify whether this only refers to those who are dead or can include living (great-)grandparents.

Finally, the translation of Nkep *velyec* as Bislama *palika* should be treated with caution. In the workshops, we discovered that there were differences in what Nkep speakers understand *palika* to refer to – members of the spouse's family or only members of the spouse's family in a specific generation. It seems likely to me that many Vanuatu languages might differ slightly in the denotation of kinship relations that are acquired through marriage. Moreover, because these kinship terms often have culturally loaded connotations (e.g. they are taboo relations), this means it would be unsurprising to me if we were to find variability in their denotation (even within the same speech community). The Bislama Dictionary glosses *palika* as '[rare] in-law (especially of the same generation). More commonly **tawian**" (Crowley, 1995, p. 179). What is recorded in Table 2 follows the description for *nvelyec* given in Bislama (above). Because it was my decision to add the Bislama word *palika*, readers should interpret this 'gloss' with these caveats in mind.

2.1 Reference with indirect possession

One kinship term appears to be conventionally expressed through indirect possession, not direct possession: *nemra* 'twin'. Thus, *nemra hooc* 'my twin', *nemra haan* 'his/her twin', **nemrac, *nemran*. The head of the possessive pronoun is the morpheme associated with 'general possession'.

In recordings made in Hog Harbour, there is one token of *walthi* 'child' being used with indirect possession. The speaker of (1) was eight years old at the time of recording. It does not seem to be typical in adult speech.

(1) *"E, i nimavcöth walthi hooc?"*

e	*i*	*nim-av-cöth*	*walthi*	*hooc*
EXCL	2SG	2SG.REAL-NEG-see	child	GEN.POSS.1SG

"Hey, didn't you see my children?" (Shirlyana-2kids-shark-20111112)[3]

For people who are shifting to Bislama kinship terms (see Section 4), the Bislama forms are indirectly possessed and occur with the general possessive pronoun head. Thus, *papa hooc* 'my father', *brat(a) hooc* 'my brother'. I have also observed people using *nwari kri hooc* 'my small man'*, nwakër kri hem* 'your small woman' instead of the directly possessed form for 'child' *nwalthüc~nwalthüm~nwalthön*. Whether the use of a common noun rather than a kinship term is an indication of change in progress or whether it carries additional sociolinguistic or pragmatic information is not clear to me. It may simply be chosen for stylistic purposes, just as I might choose to refer to my own child in English as "our young man" when speaking to his father. This is obviously an area for future qualitative investigation.

The recordings I have made also include one instance of *nveli* 'tapu relationship' occurring as an indirectly possessed noun.

(2)

nveli	*h-ooc,*	*papa*	*hen*	*S.*
taboo.relative	GEN.POSS-1SG	father	of	S.

'Someone who is taboo to me, S.'s father' (Fred-rebellion-20130422)

3 Kinship Terms: Address

A small number of kinship relations have address forms that can be used when directly addressing the kin. These are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Address forms of kinship terms in Nkep.

Address term	Relationship(s) indexed
Ta	Child addressing male parent
Ma(ma)	Child addressing female parent
Kö	(1) Woman addressing own female child or female child of her brother or sister (2) Man addressing own female child or female child of his brother or sister (cf. *nwar*)
Nwar	Man addressing own female child or female child of his brother or sister (alternative to *kö)*
Noovkar	Man addressing his male child or the male child of his brother or sister
Kaat	Woman addressing her male child or the male child of her brother or sister

Ta and *Ma* are by far the most commonly used of these forms.

[3] Nkep examples are identified by the speaker, the recording topic and date of recording.

4 Influence of Bislama and Social Change

As well as the kinship term *tawi(an)*, mentioned in section 2, Nkep speakers sometimes use Bislama terms to refer to other kinship relations. This is not unique to Nkep. Barth, Meyerhoff & Schnell (2019) present data from Schnell's fieldwork with Vera'a which showed variability in the use of indigenous kinship terms and Bislama kinship terms. Schnell found variation in the kinship terms in Vera'a – vocative forms such as *ote* 'Mum' are sometimes used by speakers of Vera'a as the head of a possessed NP to refer to the person, e.g.

(3) *ote* *mu-gi* *ne* *vesir* *di* *so ...*
mum POSS.GEN-3SG PROSP:3SG ask 3SG QUOT
'Then her mother asked her …' (1.NO.029)

(4) *n* *bubu* *mu-gi* *ne* *mul* *ma*
ART granny POSS.GEN-3SG PROSP:3SG return hither
'Then his grandmother came back home' (JAW.020)

In the Vera'a example in (3, identified using Schnell's file naming system), the speaker uses the Vera'a vocative form for 'Mum' as a head noun in a possessed NP 'her mother/mum'. In example (4), the vocative form used is *bubu* 'grandparent' borrowed from Bislama. Like speakers of Vera'a, Nkep speakers also borrow core kinship terms from Bislama. In the recordings made with speakers of Nkep since 2011, there are several examples of Bislama kinship terms being used as head nouns. The contrast in (5) and (6) show the variable use of the Nkep terms and borrowed Bislama ones for the same kinship relations. Example (7) shows this this is not restricted to *mama/papa* (and recall example (2) above).

(5) *varkün* *thn-an* *ce* *thi-aan ...*
say.to father-3SG.POSS and mother-3SG.POSS
'He said to his mother and father…' (Dige-kavakokonas-20140614)

(6) *papa* *h-aan* *ce* *mama* *h-aan* *tem-yan* *l-skul*
father GEN.POSS-3SG and mother GEN.POSS-3SG 3PL-go to-school
'His father and mother went to church' (JanetW-boyskipschurch-20111112)

(7) *ce* *brat* *h-ooc* *ru*
and brother gen.poss-1sg two
'and two of my brothers' (JanetN-Rebellion-20111030)

There appears to be some generational change taking place, with older speakers more likely to use the Nkep kinship terms than younger speakers are. Example (5) was produced by a man in his 80s, and (6) was produced by a ten-year-old. As we would expect with generational change in progress, this does not mean that older speakers do not sometimes use Bislama kinship terms or that younger speakers do not sometimes use the Nkep kinship terms. We are speaking of probabilities or relative likelihood.

The dictionary workshop participants were predominantly older members of the community (as these are the community members who are most likely to have the time to devote to attending days and days of workshopping). There were two younger members (people in their 30s) who participated as well. Some of the kinship terms that older speakers produced in the workshops were unknown to the younger team members. We have anecdotal evidence (in the sense that various linguists have shared similar informal observations), that there is increasing use of Bislama kinship terms in a number of local languages in Vanuatu.

Other aspects of social change are having independent effects on the kinship terms people regularly use. Employment law differentiates immediate brothers and sisters from other 'brothers' and 'sisters' for the purposes, for example, of bereavement leave. This triggers a need for a kinship distinction which was not needed in the past. In my observation, the use of the innovative term *stret X* as in *stret brata/sista* or *stret mama/papa* ('real, proper brother/sister', 'real/proper mother/father') has increased in Bislama over the last thirty years, very likely in response to contact with the dominant cultural norms in the regulatory environment. Since the default language of many people's workplace is Bislama, it makes sense that it is in Bislama that these distinctions show up first. The Anglo-French kinship principles which differentiate 'blood parent' and 'blood sibling' from other family members in those generations has become instrumental in, for example, the social domains of work and legal rights.

I have not yet noticed the use of this phrasing in Nkep. That is, I have not so far noted any instances of *thiëc naatur* 'proper mother', *manec naatur* 'proper brother' in Nkep. This distinction may settle and become restricted to when people are speaking Bislama, with the traditional Hawaiian principles persisting in Nkep. Alternatively, the social change which has resulted in the gradual realignment of Hawaiian kinship principles with Eskimo principles (as in English) may become as relevant in everyday life in Hog Harbour/Vüthiev and we will see change in Nkep kinship terminology over time.

5 Acquisition of Kinship Terms

The sociolinguistic context in which kinship terms are used in Hog Harbour/Vüthiev is probably rather similar to the sociolinguistic context in many Ni-Vanuatu communities. Family members are generally referred to with {kinship term} or {kinship term} + {proper name}. Address is either {proper name} (downward generation), {kinship term} + {proper name} or {kinship address term}.

To facilitate the acquisition of kinship terms, adult generations of speakers model the correct terms for children in daily conversation from birth. That is, when a child is around and an adult needs to refer to or address someone, the adult will centre the child as the deictic centre of the discourse. This means that the speaker changes how s/he refers to or addresses someone when a small child becomes part of the household. Someone known as *sista* or *utiec* for years, becomes *mama PN* or *thiëc/thiëm PN*. Some readers might have grown up in cultures (including anglophone ones) where similar norms were observed. That is, family members were conventionally referred to by the term appropriate for the child to use whenever the child was the addressee or auditor ('Give Auntie Edie these.').

In other words, a good deal of sociolinguistic work in Hog Harbour goes into making sure the child's perspective is normalised in everyday speech about family. This may be true in Ni-Vanuatu communities across the islands. To the best of my knowledge, we do not yet have any ethnographies of language socialisation in Vanuatu that address this, though work by Heidi

Colleran's BirthRites project may help fill this gap (Cristia, Gautheron & Colleran, 2023; Sibilsky et al., 2022, and cf. Kronenfeld's 2013 summary).

My personal experience with the Nkep community is that the practice of switching to use the child as the discourse centre for kinship terms even extends to conversations when the child is neither addressee or auditor, nor even a likely overhearer. This may have also been the norm in the anglophone speech community I grew up in, but as I was the child then, I cannot say. The use of "Mum" and "Dad" as mutual address terms between parents did occur in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s, but it was already rare in middle class communities. These differences in cultural norms have been highlighted for me at moments of misunderstanding or non-comprehension in Vanuatu. I have sometimes misunderstood who the referent is in conversations, when an adult uses kinship terms that centre a child's perspective. For example, the use of {kinship term} + {proper name} by an adult to refer to my (non-present) husband when the two of us are privately catching up on family news has caused some pragmatic misfires.

Obviously, at some stage, Nkep speakers do learn the algorithms that underlie the appropriate use of kinship terms, and it seems pretty clear to me that this is what speakers work through when they have to use a kinship term with someone they do not see on a regular basis. (With a population of about 1000 residents in the village of Hog Harbour/Vüthiev and extended family ties all along the East Coast of Santo and into the hills including Sara and Kole, this occurs fairly often.) So, for example, when *man Hog Haba* made contact with me in Wellington, New Zealand, I asked Shirly Molisale's advice on what to call him. It took a few moments while she worked through the relationship and was able to give an answer. Many people working in Vanuatu will have had similar experiences.

6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this paper is to document the kinship terms used to refer to and to address family members in Nkep, the Ni-Vanuatu language used in Hog Harbour village/Vüthiev. We have seen that most – but not all – indigenous kinship terms are directly possessed when they are used to refer to someone. We have also seen that address terms are much more restricted in number and generally only apply to kin who are one generation removed from the speaker.

The paper has also documented change taking place in Nkep. This shows up in the use of Bislama kinship terms instead of traditional Nkep head nouns. In turn the use of Bislama terms triggers a change in the syntax of kinship reference, because Bislama kinship terms are always indirectly possessed. In this change, Nkep is not unusual – there are other examples in northern languages of Vanuatu.

Finally, the paper concludes with some comments on the acquisition of kinship terms and it observes that children are provided with a lot of support in learning how to position themselves appropriately in the social structures of Vüthiev/Hog Harbour.

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Appendix: Inflected Forms of Nkep Kinship Terms (First Line: 1s, 2s, 3s; Second Line: 1p.excl, 1p.incl, 2p, 3p)

Reference term	Relationship(s) indexed
thiëc, thiëm, thiaan, thiëcam, thiaar, thiëcei, thiëngör	mother or mother's sister
thnec, thnem, thnan, thnecam, thnaar, thnecei, thnengör	father or father's brother
nwalthüc, nwalthüm, nwalthön, nwalthecam, nwalthör, nwalthücei, nwalthüngör	child
tateic, tateim, tatein tateicam, tateicei, tatengör	cross-sex sibling (woman's brother; man's sister)
wutiec, wutiem, wutian, wütiecam, wütiecei, wütiengör[4]	woman's sister
manec, manem, manan manecam, manecei, manengör	man's brother
thvüc, thvüm, thvön, thvücam, thvör, thvücei, thvüngnör	grandparent
viec, viem, vian, viecamthël, viar, viecei, viegnör	grandchild
seklec, seklem, seklan, seklecam, seklar, seklecei, seklengör	child of the sister of a man
velyec, velyem, velyan, velyecam, velyerthël, velyecei, velyengör	(1) spouse's parent (Bislama 'palika'?) (2) spouse's cross-sex sibling (wife's sister; husband's brother) (Bislama 'tawean')
nëvtëc, nëvtëm, nëvtaan, nëvtëcam, nëvtaar, nëvtëcei, nëvtëngör	mother's brother
thvüc, thvüm, thvön, thvücam, thvör, thvücei, thvüngör	grandparent of a grandparent ('hem we olfala bubu blong mi i singaotem bubu long hem')
nilec, nilem, nilan, nilecam, nilaar, nilecei, nilengör	family line

[4] Marie Tain Ali rejects an inclusive plural form for *utiec* and *manec*. She also strongly prefers 'woman's sister with an initial /w-/, the form *utiec* was provided by Manasseh Vocor and other older speakers at the dictionary workshop. *Utiec~wutiec* is clearly inherently variable in the Nkep community. There is widespread variation between initial /w/ and /v/ prevocalically, e.g. *welwel~velvel* 'sell, buy, exchange'. It's unclear whether this is related.