LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF FORE KINSHIP[1]

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Fore society is distinctly laterally oriented. Kinship terminology is heavily weighted towards Ego's contemporary generation, carrying with it implied obligations and promises of social security. Concern is with the here and now, and this concern is reflected in kinship terminology.

Linguistically only five generations are recognised: Ego's contemporaries, two preceding generations, and two succeeding ones. Kin further removed than these are collectively known as *nayá:bámáwé* "my fingers".[2] Usage of this term has not been observed in connection with living kin, seemingly being reserved for departed ancestry or future progeny. In those few rare instances where such a living relationship exists, there is usually reversion to grandparent-grandchild terminology. Linguistic evidence thus gives some indication that events from the past, particularly those which have no direct bearing on today's social obligations, are simply lumped together as history. The uncertain future is also an entity outside the realm of current social control.

As Glasse and Lindenbaum (1971) point out, the Fore kinship system is fluid and accommodating. While ostensibly based on blood lines, marriage, and respective generations, practical realities are such that kinship terminology is readily adapted to suit the local situation. Some specific observations: a) a paternal uncle the same approximate age termed "brother"; b) an older brother called "father"; c) a new resident with only distant affinal ties accepted as "brother-in-law". Even the author, a complete foreigner, on taking up residency, found himself adopted into the system, with a string of new relatives and accompanying social obligations and privileges.

For those who migrate away and establish their social ties elsewhere, previous associations become more and more remote, with succeeding generations giving little or no recognition to these former ties. Young (1974: 139) mentions how the related Bena-Bena speakers not only allow for, but also often encourage such changes in group membership.

SIBLINGS

As already mentioned, there is a heavy linguistic emphasis laterally. Five sibling terms are in use, dependent upon sex of addressor and recipient, and upon age relativity. A male refers to his elder brothers as nága:ntowé (of which ´ga: is the root, and -ntó the diminutive). A female speaker refers to her elder brother as nao'mantówé (o'ma root, -ntó diminutive). nao'mantówé is an obvious compound of naone "my friend", in which the root o of "friend" is personalised by what appears to be an animate subject marker -ma.[3]

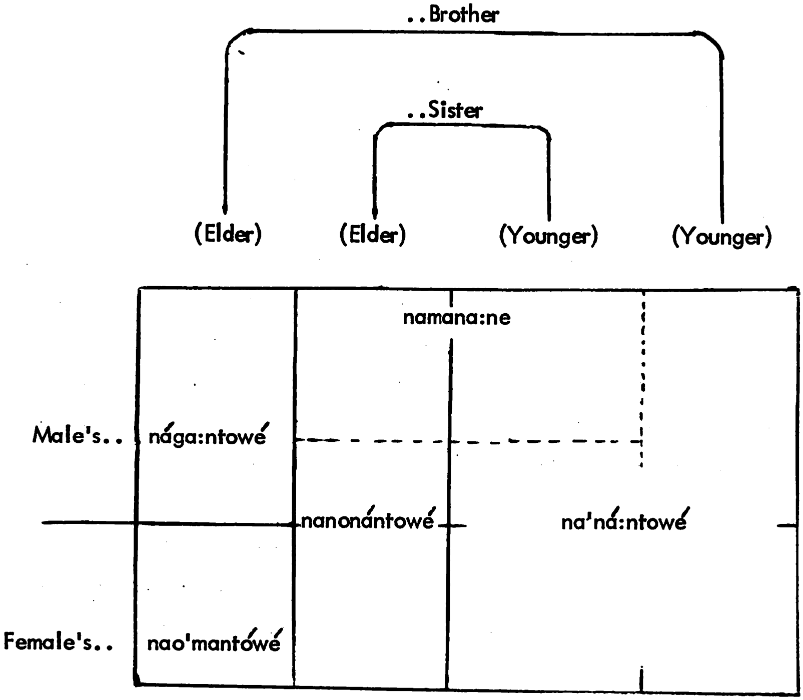
Siblings of both sexes refer to their elder sisters as nanonántowé (noná root, -ntó diminutive), though occasionally a female speaker will refer to her elder sister by the male's elder brother term, nága:ntowé. Kerr (1973: 781) mentions in passing that nanonántowé means "little mother." It is indeed a compound of nanowé "my mother", in which the root no´ "mother" is compounded by the addition of -ná to add an element of substitution or proxy. Thus nanonántowé "my elder sister" is literally "my little substitute mother", a rather accurate description of the role of an elder sister in Fore society. This same little -ná particle also appears to compound the root ´ga: of nága:ntowé "my elder brother" to ´ga'ná: in nága'ná:ntowé "my special friend", a male reciprocal term of extreme endearment.

Younger sib occupy a less important position in Fore society, and this lesser role is reflected in the collapsing of sex distinctions when referring to younger siblings. All are called na'ná:ntowé ('ná: root, -ntó diminutive), irrespective of the sex of either addressor or recipient. This relationship of role to terminology is highlighted by

Glick (1967) throughout his discussion of kinship of the closely related Gimi language group. His comments are equally applicable to Fore. Even so, the actual terms are overtly indicative of specific kin relationships, and it is within the concept of an "ideal" system that this terminology is discussed and glossed.

The fifth term used between siblings is namana:ne (mana: root), which a male may use generally for all or any of his sisters. Table 1 projects this interplay of age and sex, which has its keenest focus on the elder brother relationship.

TABLE 1: showing SIBLING TERMINOLOGY.


..Brother
..Sister
(Elder)
(Elder)
(Younger)
(Younger)
namana:ne
Male's..
nága:ntowé
nanonántowé
na'ná:ntowé
Female's..
nao'mantówé

QUASI-SIB

Quasi-kin terminology indicating mutual lateral support also exists. When confinements of mothers within a social grouping overlap, the children borne refer to each other as nagaya:we (gaya: root) "my agemate". This is essentially a male-to-male or female-to-female relationship, though cross-sex usage of the term has been noted. An excellent account of the obligations and privileges between agemates has been given by Lindenbaum and Glasse (1969). Agemates function within the system as acquired siblings, but with even stronger emotional ties.

Fellow initiates, how many times are already nagaya:we, may also call each other namaewé (mae´root). Again they function within the system as siblings, and may use these acquired kin terms interchangeably with personal names.

Co-wives refer to each other as nabaemuwé (baemu´root), and function within society on much the same relationship level as sisters.

Endearment terms such as nága'ná:ntowé "my special friend" previously mentioned, and various compounds of naone "my friend, my kinsman" may also be used to indicate particular emotional bonds, but carry no specific kin relationship.

COUSINS

Sibling relationship and terminology is extended to parallel-cousins, particularly on the father's side where co-habitation is normal. Mother's sisters' children, who normally dwell elsewhere, are known as nanogáewe (nogáe root, which is probably a compound of no´ "mother"). This term carries a bond of endearment. Where such cousins live in close proximity and thus have more supportive ties, sibling terminology is more likely to be used, though either may be chosen to focus the relationship desired at the moment.

Great social significance is attached to the brother-sister relationship, which fact is attested tc by both Berndt (1954: 42) and Glasse and Lindenbaum (1971). A woman's brother, particularly her elder brother, plays an important part in his sister's life, and her husband is socially obligated to him. This highly rated brother-sister relationship is evidenced in the special terminology and expectations associated with cross-cousins. Here the brother-sister tie from the previous generation is in focus. A special term, nába:wé (ba:´ root)[4], is used reciprocally for father's sisters' children and for mother's brothers' children. Among other things, usage of the term indicates that they are suitable as, even preferred as, prospective partners in marriage, an event which solidifies already existent mutually supportive ties.[5] Cousin relationships are charted in Table 2.

TABLE 2: showing PARALLEL- AND CROSS-COUSIN TERMINOLOGY.

		..Brother	..Sister
Children of ..	Father's..	SIBLING (see Table 1)	nába:wé*
	Mother's..	nába:wé*	nanogáewe* (or SIBLING)

*Reciprocal terminology.

AFFINES

Terminology for lateral affinal kin is once again indicative of role. A husband calls both brothers and sisters of his wife by the term naoka:wé (oka:´ root), which is reciprocal. Thus males use the term of both males and females, but female speakers use it only in reference to males. This naoka:wé relationship is of prime importance socially and politically. It is the result of a social contract (marriage), and involves compensatory payments not only at marriage, but also on occasions of childbearing and death.

It is a "tabu" relationship, and as such these affines are known to each other only by the *naoka:wé* term. Use of proper names is forbidden. Liaison between male and female *naoka:wé* is incestuous.

Opposed to this is the *nagáiwe* (*gái* root) relationship which is indicative of possible future marriage, somewhat according to the ancient levirate system. A man may expect to inherit his elder brother's wife upon his decease. Thus he calls her *nagáiwe*, which she reciprocates. In this situation not only parallel-cousins are classified as siblings, but also cross-cousins and agemates. So the wives of elder brothers, elder cousins and agemates are considered potential wives, and labelled as such. Wives of younger brothers may also be known (reciprocally) as *nagáiwe*, even though there is no real expectation of future marriage. Often, though, because of the age difference, these younger women are termed *nana:túwé* (*na:tú′* root) "my daughter-in-law", to which the response is *karená:wé* (*karená:′* root) "father-in-law".[6]

A third lateral affinal term is the reciprocal *námuwé* (*′mu′* root). It is used by a female speaker of her brother's wife, or conversely by a female of her husband's sister. Socially it is a relationship very close to that of sister. Table 3 charts these three terms.

Two other lateral affinal relationships are recognised, each pivoting around two marriages. Firstly, when sisters or female cousins marry, their husbands use the term *naontowe* (*o* root, *-ntó* diminutive) of each other. Similarly the wives of brothers or cousins use this reciprocal term of each other. *naontowe*, literally "my little eye", has the distinct flavour of equality of position within the system by virtue of a similarly structured marriage, a feeling of being in the same situation, together.

TABLE 3: showing LATERAL AFFINAL TERMINOLOGY
WITH SINGLE MARRIAGE PIVOT.

	..Brother	..Sister	
Male's SPOUSE'S..	naoka:wé*		..Sister's SPOUSE
Female's SPOUSE'S..	nagáiwe*	námuwé*	..Brother's SPOUSE
	Male's..	Female's..	

*Reciprocal terminology.

Secondly, a man will refer to his wife's elder brother's wife as aentá:we (aentá: root) "mother-in-law",[7] while she responds with nasa:múwe (sa:mú root) "my son-in-law". Although this in effect recognises a generation lag,[8] he nevertheless does not refer to his wife's elder brother as "father-in-law", but rather retains the normal naoka:wé "my tabu brother-in-law" terminology. Should his wife's brother be younger than she, then the term chosen for his wife's brother's wife will be naoka:wé also, or the relationship may simply be ignored and a proper name used. If naoka:wé is used, it is of course reciprocated.

A composite of lateral affinal kin pivoting on both single and double marriages is displayed in Table 4, where focus is placed on the relationship between the sexes.

TABLE 4: showing COMPOSITE LATERAL AFFINAL TERMINOLOGY.

	..Male	..Female	Marriage Pivots
Male...	naoka:wé* SiHu (WiBr)†	nagáiwe* BrWi (HuBr)†	One
	naontowe* WiSiHu*	aentá:we WiElBrWi naoka:wé* § WiYgBrWi	Two
Female...	naoka:wé* SiHu (WiSi) †	námuwé* BrWi (HuSi)†	One
	nasa:múwe HuYgSiHu naoka:wé* § HuElSiHu	naontowe* HuBrWi*	Two

*Reciprocal terminology.
†Reciprocating gloss bracketed.
§ Relationship may be ignored.

ONE GENERATION REMOVED

The lateral aspect of Fore kinship again comes into focus when we consider the relationships of the preceding generation. In this parental generation, not only "father" is known as naba:wé (ba:´ root), but also father's brothers, father's sisters' husbands and mother's sisters' husbands. A special term, á:búwe (á:bú root) "paternal uncle", is also used, but only of father's brothers, signifying the special responsibility paternal uncles have in the marriage arrangement. "Mother" is known as nanowé (no´ root), as are mother's sisters and father's brothers' wives. nanosówe (no´ root, -só diminutive) "my little mother" may also be used of mother's sisters, whose children may be classified either as siblings or as nanogáewe as given previously. Each of these parental figures then refer to Ego as either yagará:we (yagará: root) "son" or aragáwé (aragá´ root) "daughter".[9]

Next we consider the special terms used of father's sisters and mother's brothers. Here the brother-sister relationship of the previous generation comes into focus. Father's sister is called nama:múwé (ma:mú´ root), and she reciprocates with "son" or "daughter", even though her children are known to Ego as nába:wé and not as siblings. Mother's brother is termed nana:gúwé (na:gú´ root)[10], and his wife also has a special term, nana:garáwé (na:gará´ root). They in turn have a unique term for Ego, nama:gáwé (ma:gá´ root). This terminology serves to show that the responsibilities felt between brother and sister are not limited to them alone, but also benefit the following generation.

Affinally, all of one's spouse's kin one generation removed are known as karená:wé (karená:´ root) "father-in-law" and aentá:we (aentá: root) "mother-in-law", or conversely nasa:múwe (sa:mú root) "my son-in-law" and nana:túwé (na:tú´ root) "my daughter-in-law".

OTHER GENERATIONS

Here the terminology becomes exceedingly sparse. All kin, both consanguinal and affinal, two generations removed, are referred to as átá:we (átá: root) "grandfather" or á:rówe (á:ró root) "grandmother", reciprocating with naga:'nuwe (ga:'nu root "my grandchild".

Generations further removed than this are simply lumped together and know as nayá:bámáwé (yá:bá´ root, -ma subject) "my extremities".

Kerr (1973: 772-3) notes that most of the languages of the contiguous Eastern family of Highland languages have some kind of grammatical contrastiveness between kin terms. Vincent (1973: 532-3) shows that in Tairora this revolves around a subject suffix -ba obligatorily found on some kin terms (which Kerr calls "senior" kin), and another subject suffix -bano which optionally occurs with the other terms (Kerr: "junior" kin). No such senior-junior dichotomy occurs with Fore kin.

It is perhaps interesting to note though, that all kin terms but one (viz. namana:ne "my sister") fall into a single noun class equivalent to the V class proposed by Bee (1965: 4) for the Eastern family.[11]

SUMMARY

In summary, let us note some of the linguistic implications of this Fore kinship system. Firstly, while the actual terms indicate specific blood and marriage relationships, no account would be complete without some indication of the social obligations and dependencies inherent in their usage. To say that á:búwe simply means "father's brother" would be an insufficient listing of the meaning of the word, unless the user understands these implications. Some indication that á:búwe is one responsible for arranging Ego's marriage should also be noted. It can thus be seen that kin terminology used between Fore speakers is a pointer to their social organisation. And since far greater emphasis is attached to human relationships in Fore society than to material possessions, can we imply that the wider the range of kinship terminology, the more important is the place of human relationships within a society?

Secondly, we note that the actual range of Fore kin terminology is widest in reference to the contemporary generation. It takes into account the sex of both addressor and recipient. Movement away from Ego's generation decreases the distinctions made, firstly according to the sex of the addressor (with regard to children, parents, grandparents), then by that of the recipient (grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, greatgrandparents), and finally as to the generations themselves (three or more generations removed). Here again we see that the linguistic picture projects a concise summary of important social relationships, showing by the greatest diversity that those on the contemporary level are considered most productive, followed by those of the preceding generation.

A third point to be raised from kin terminology is the place of the individual within society. Each person needs to know where he fits, and within the Fore system one knows his place according to the actual terms used.[12] Naturally in this regard the system is somewhat open to manipulation, and specific kin terms may be used to create specific situations. It is obvious then, at least within societies which feature kin co-habitation, that kinship terminology actually assists the establishment of social order. A breakdown of the system as a result of change in culture, from whatever source, will axiomatically facilitate some breakdown of tribal law and order.

Fourthly, a study of kin terminology reveals some of society's emphases. For instance, in Fore society, the peculiarity of special terminology for father's sister and her children, for mother's brother and his children, and for sister's children, highlights the emphasis placed on the brother-sister relationship. Further, the separation of marriageable from non-marriageable cousins, and marriageable affines from tabu ones, gives an indication of the way in which Fore society consolidates itself.

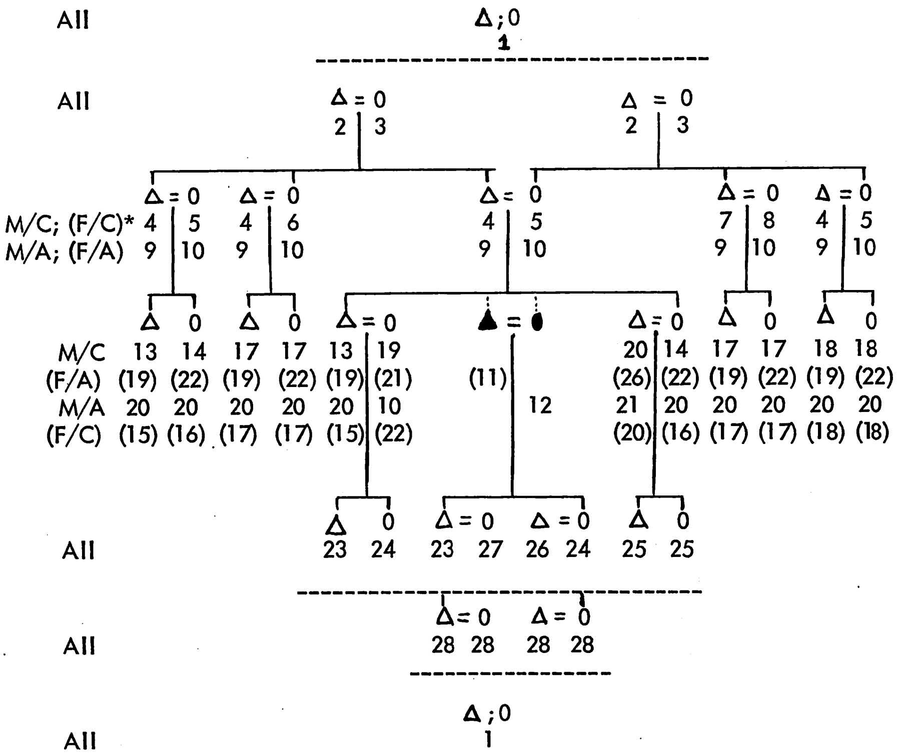
Finally, the single term used for kin more than two generations removed indicates a very shallow conception of time depth, a problem many Papua New Guinean teachers of history have had to face.

Thus in Fore, as in many another exotic language, a study of kinship terminology and usage is not only interesting, but one of the most concise indications of the mores of local society.

The Fore kin system is displayed in Table 5. In this composite chart, Ego may be either male or female (blocked as ▲ and ● respectively). To read Male Ego's Consanguinal Kin and Female Ego's Affinal Kin, Male Ego should be connected to the horizontal sibling connection above. For Male's Affinal Kin and Female's Consanguinal

Kin, Female Ego should be attached instead. A concise listing of all kin terms, the key to this chart, is given in Table 6.

TABLE 5: COMPOSITE KINSHIP CHART


All
Δ;0
1
All
Δ = 0
2 3
Δ = 0
2 3
Δ = 0 Δ = 0 Δ = 0 Δ = 0 Δ = 0
M/C; (F/C)* 4 5 4 6 4 5 7 8 4 5
M/A; (F/A) 9 10 9 10 9 10 9 10 9 10
Δ 0 Δ 0 Δ = 0 ▲ = ● Δ = 0 Δ 0 Δ 0
M/C 13 14 17 17 13 19 20 14 17 17 18 18
(F/A) (19) (22) (19) (22) (19) (21) (11) (26) (22) (19) (22) (19) (22)
M/A 20 20 20 20 20 10 12 21 20 20 20 20 20
(F/C) (15) (16) (17) (17) (15) (22) (20) (16) (17) (17) (18) (18)
All
Δ 0 Δ = 0 Δ = 0 Δ 0
23 24 23 27 26 24 25 25
All
Δ = 0 Δ = 0
28 28 28 28
All
Δ ;0
1

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*M/C Male's Consanguinal Kin
M/A Male's Affinal Kin
F/C Female's Consanguinal Kin
F/A Female's affinal Kin

TABLE 6: KEY TO KINSHIP CHART

Key	Term	Generation	Sex	Specific Denota	General Classification
1	nayá:bámáwé	±>2	→M,F	Fa,Mo of 2,3,9,10 So,Da of 28	(my) ancestor (my) descendent
2	átá:we	+2	→M	Fa of 4,5,6,7,8,9,10	grandfather
3	á:rówe	+2	→F	Mo of 4,5,6,7,8,9,10	grandmother
4	naba:wé	+1	→M	Fa,FaBr;Hu of 5,6	(my) father
	á:búwe	+1	→M	FaBr	paternal uncle
5	nanowé	+1	→F	Mo,MoSi,FaBrWi	(my) mother
	nanosówe	+1	→F	MoSi	(my) little mother
6	nama:múwé	+1	→F	FaSi	(my) paternal aunt
7	nana:gúwé pa:pá:we	+1	→M	MoBr	(my) maternal uncle
8	nana:garáwé	+1	→F	MoBrWi	(my) maternal aunt
9	karená:wé	+1	→M	Spouse's 4,7	father-in-law
10	aentá:we	+1 0	→F M→F	Spouse's 5,6,8 WiBrWi	mother-in-law
11	nawaewé	0	F→M	Hu	(my) husband
12	nana:ráwe	0	M→F	Wi	(my) wife
13	nága:ntowé	0	M→M	ElBr,FaBrElSo,El 18	(my) elder brother
	na'ná:ntowé	0	M,F→M,F	YgSib,FaBrYgCh,Yg 18	(my) younger sibling
14	nanonántowé	0	M,F→F	ElSi,FaBrElDa,El 18	(my) elder sister
	na'ná:ntowé	0	M,F→M,F	YgSib,FaBrYgCh,Yg 18	(my) younger sibling
	namana:ne	0	M→F	Si,FaBrDa,18	(my) sister

Cont'd. next page.

TABLE 6 cont.

15	nao'mantówé	0	F→M	ElBr, FaBrElSo, El 18	(my) elder brother
	na'ná:ntowé	0	M,F→M,F	YgSib, FaBrYgCh, Yg 18	(my) younger sibling
16	nanonántowé	0	M,F→F	ElSi, FaBrElDa, El 18	(my) elder sister
	na'ná:ntowé	0	M,F→M,F	YgSib, FaBrYgCh, Yg 18	(my) younger sibling
17	nába:wé	0	M,F→M,F	FaSiCh, MoBrCh	(my) cross-cousin
18	nanogáewe	0	M,F→M,F	MoSiCh	(my) parallel-cousin
19	nagáiwe	0	M→F F→M	BrWi, CoWi HuBr, HuCo	(my) marriageable brother/sister-in-law
20	naoka:wé	0	M,F→M M→M,F	SiHu WiSib	(my) tabu brother/sister-in-law
21	naontowe	0	M→M F→F	Hu of 20 Wi of 19	(my) fellow-in-law
22	námuwé	0	F→F	HuSi, BrWi	(my) sibling sister-in-law
23	yagará:we	-1	→M	So; So of 13, 18	son
24	aragáwé	-1	→F	Da; Da of 13, 18	daughter
25	nama:gáwé	-1	→M,F	Ch of 14	(my) nephew/niece
26	nasa:múwe	-1	→M	Hu of 24	(my) son-in-law
27	nana:túwé	-1	→F	Wi of 23	(my) daughter-in-law
28	naga:'nuwe	-2	→M,F	Ch of 23, 24, 25	(my) grandchild

NOTES

1. Presentation of this paper to the Ninth Annual Congress of the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea was aided by a grant from the Papua New Guinea Research Funds of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Fore, a language of the East Central Family of the East New Guinea Highland Stock (Wurm 1964), is spoken by about 15000 people in the Okapa area of the E.H.D., P.N.G.

2. *nayá:bámáwé* (´accent, : length) has the components *na-* my, *yá:bá´* root, -*ma* subject marker, -*w* class marker, -*e* indicative mood. The root *yá:bá´* "finger" (in which the third acute indicates induced accent/s on succeeding syllable/s) is itself a fusion of *ya:´* "arm" and *aba:´* "outer bark of extremity". All kin terms with obligatory prefixed referents are given in first person form (*na-* my) and with class (-*w* or -*n*) and mood (-*e*) markers.

3. -*ma* has already appeared in *nayá:bámáwé* "my fingers, my ancestors". Renck (1975) uses the term "Pivotal" marker for its equivalent in the related Yagaria language.

4. An interesting contrast in accent occurs between *nába:wé* "my cross-cousin" and *naba:wé* "my father". I strongly suspect that these two kin terms are non-cognate.

5. In a sample of 641 marriages in the South Fore census division, Glasse (1969: 32) records 24.8% as occurring between a male and his "true" MoBrDa, another 19.3% with a "classificatory" MoBrDa, and a further 5.8% with his father's MoBrDa ("true" or "classificatory"), a total of almost 50% of the marriage sample.

6. Kin terms given in forms not commencing with *na-* "my" are adaptations of more general terms. *Karená :´*, which actually means "old man", requires possession to become a bona fide kin term, giving *karená:nené* (*karená:´* root, *-né´* my, -*n* class, -*e* mood) or *karená:némpawé* (*karená:´* root, -*né´* my, -*mpa* subject, -*w* class, -*e* mood) "my old man, my father-in-law". All kinship terms, with or without obligatory prefix referent, may take such added possessive suffixes.

7. aentá:we "old woman" becomes aentá:nené or aentá:némpawé "my old woman, my mother-in-law" when used as a kin term.

8. More likely than not the system again recognises the close relationship between a woman and her elder brother, so that the respective spouses are not on equal terms. Rather they have social responsibilities toward each other as do mother-in-law and son-in-law.

9. Once again these terms yagará: "man" and aragá́ "girl" (note the metathesis) must be possessed to form kin terms yagará:nené, yagará:némpawé "my son" and aragánené, aragánémpawé "my daughter".

10. An alternative term, pá:pá:we (pá:pá: root) is common for "mother's brother", probably originating as baby talk.

11. Fore, like many of the languages in the Eastern and East Central families, has three noun classes, labelled by Bee (op. cit.) according to morphophonemic processes as the V, N and Q classes.

12. When conflict arises, the first question asked is "Who ...?". This knowledge of one's relationship to the parties involved determines whether any supportive action needs to be taken.

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