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A CASE OF CHRISTIANIZATION OF ONE OF THE HIGHLY MARKED LEXICO-SEMANTICAL FIELDS IN GEORGIAN

The lexical-semantic fields, denoting blood relationships in the Kartvelian languages are based on different principles.

In Georgian this lexical-semantic field has a formal marker: its unit structurally is a composite of postposition system. Its first part is a lexeme, denoting blood relative (elder generation from both father's and mother's side) and the second is a possessive pronoun (according to person and number, including the so-called "honorific plural"). The single non-blood relative in this field before adopting Christianity was a lexeme, that denoted uncle's wife (in the beginning a wife of father's brother). The fact that it turned out to be in this field, is stipulated by its function to create reference point (first, second or third person) to relatives by blood (resp. by family).

This lexical-semantic field is highly marked, or is limited very strictly.

After Georgia's converting to Christianity (IV c.) this lexical-semantic field has been Christianized or completed by a lexeme, denoting godfather, or blood relatives of elder generation being added by soul relatives (godfather or godmother), on which at the same time, according to the Georgian tradition, all the habits and traditions that characterized blood relatives (e.g. prohibition of marriages between godfather's and godchild's families during the same number of generations), were extended and fixed for descendants of one father and mother.