2 Towards an analysis of meaning

It is one thing to be interested in the ethnographic study of idea systems. It is another thing to be able to carry out this type of investigation successfully, as Kluckhohn's work with Navaho philosophy indicated. The basic problem revolves around the issue of *identification*; that is, *the development of a method by which an ethnographer can reliably identify cultural ideas, beliefs, or values.* At first the issue did not seem particularly problematic. It seemed one could simply interview the people one was studying, and from these interviews determine the native systems of ideas.

Indeed, there had been a number of studies in anthropology which used this approach. Malinowski had interviewed the Trobrianders about their beliefs about magic and religion and Evans-Pritchard had interviewed the Azande about their beliefs about witchcraft, to cite two well-known examples. Such interviewing was sufficient to investigate the specific ideas surrounding a specific set of institutions. However, ordinary interviewing did not get at deeper, more general understandings which were not related to any particular set of cultural practices.

Further, there was a general intuition that cultural systems of ideas consisted of more than just *lists* of statements. The intuition was that there was something *organized and systematic* about culturally shared ideas, that they had some kind of *structure* or form. Note the continual use of the terms "system" and "systematic" in the quote from Beattie in the previous chapter. But what form did these systems have? Conceptual clarification of these questions had to be forthcoming before real ethnographic research could be carried out.

One of the early formulations concerning the nature of cultural idea systems was presented in a paper by Anthony Wallace on "Revitalization Movements" (1956). Wallace defined a revitalization movement as a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." Such attempts at drastic and rapid change are typically found in nativistic, revivalist, and messianic movements in which a society, stressed by rapid social change, attempts radically to restructure its institutions to bring about a new, more effective way of life.

According to Wallace, revitalization movements are brought about by a

charismatic leader who has a vision which serves as a guide to a new way of life. This vision constitutes a restructuring first of the prophet's and eventually a whole segment of the society's *mazeway*. A mazeway, as defined by Wallace, is "a mental image of the society and its culture." It includes "perceptions of both the maze of physical objects of the environment (internal and external, human and non-human) and also of the ways in which this maze can be manipulated by the self and others in order to minimize stress."

The concept of a "mazeway" – *a mental image* of the objects in a person's world and how they can be manipulated – proved useful in describing the kind of change brought about by visionaries such as Handsome Lake, the Seneca prophet who established a new religion and way of life among nineteenth-century reservation Iroquois. However, while useful as a formulation broader in scope than traditional terms like "religion" and "magic," the "mazeway" concept still left unspecified the problem of how to identify the elements of the "mental image" and how to determine how these elements are organized.

Structure

The reason that the kinship terminology papers by Lounsbury and Goodenough had such a large impact was that they presented a rigorous method for identifying "idea units" and analyzing the organization or structure of these units. While developed specifically for the analysis of kinship terms, it appeared that the general principles involved in identification and analysis could be extended to other domains. It was this body of methods and goals which was to become the agenda of cognitive anthropology.

The basic ideas used by Lounsbury and Goodenough were not novel. In fact, the development of these ideas goes back at least to the 1920s in linguistics. At the First International Congress of Slavic Philologists, the Prague Linguistic Circle, including such figures as Roman Jakobson and N. Trubetzkoy, presented a *Thèse* which introduced the concept of "structure" as a key theoretical term. Influenced by linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Baudouin de Courtenay, the Prague Circle went against the standard philological agenda of historical study and the construction of etymologies for particular words. The new agenda was to study language as a *system* of communication. The major question was to work out how the parts of a language fit together – how they make up a structure. A central idea was that the units of the structure could be identified only *in terms of their relationships with other units*. In making up the structure, the parts define each other, and in defining each other, the parts make a structure.

Jakobson and other linguists of the Prague School were able to apply the general concept of structure to various aspects of the study of language with notable success. Their exemplary work was in the area of phonology – the analysis of the sounds of a language. One basic idea that had been assimilated into

American linguistics through Jakobson and Halle's influential *Fundamentals of Language* was the notion of *distinctive features*. Briefly, rather than treating the "chunks of sound" (the sort of thing we recognize with letters of the alphabet) as the ultimate units, the distinctive feature approach decomposed each sound chunk into "features" which distinguish it from other such sound chunks.

Take, for example, the spoken word "pat." The sound represented by the "p" contrasts with the sound of "b" in "bat." The difference between the sounds is that the "p" sound is *unvoiced* – that is, the vocal chords do not vibrate when pronouncing "p," unlike the "b" sound in which the vocal chords do vibrate. The sound represented by "p" also contrasts with the sound of the "t" in "tat." Here the distinction between "p" and "t" is that for "p" the passage of air is first cut by closing the lips, then releasing the pressure, while for "t" the passage is first cut off by blocking the air with the tongue against the *alveolar* area immediately behind the teeth. Thus "p" is characterized by the articulatory feature of being a *bilabial stop*, while "t" is an *alveolar stop*.

Not all of the features of a particular sound in a particular word are necessarily distinctive. Some features may be *conditioned* by the surrounding environment of the word, and may not signal a true difference. For example, when pronouncing the word "pat," English speakers produce a small puff of air which can be felt by holding one's hand in front of one's mouth. This puff of air is called *aspiration*. However, when we pronounce the word "spat" we do not produce this puff of air. Yet in both cases we hear the same "p" phoneme because "aspiration" is non-distinctive in English (although aspiration is a distinctive feature in many languages).

There are other kinds of differences in pronunciation which are also non-distinctive – we may say "pat the cat gently" to a child, pronouncing the "p" with much less force than "push off!" to someone who is annoying us. Such stylistic and emphasis related features do not signal a difference in word meaning, and so are also non-distinctive.

What we hear, then, when we hear a word, is not exactly what is actually pronounced. What we hear are the distinctive features bound into bundles which form perceptual units called "phonemes." The phonemic analysis of a language uncovers the phonemes by determining the distinctive features of the language – that is, the structure of the distinctions which make up these units.

By the 1950s phonemic analysis had become a well-known exemplary model for the analysis of cultural materials. A programatic extension of this idea had been proposed by Kenneth Pike (1967), who argued that these same concepts and methods could be used in the analysis of other kinds of cultural materials, such as games or folktales. The important idea was that one could find structure *in* cultural materials by discovering distinctive contrasts between different aspects of these materials. Pike called such analyses *emic* analyses, based on the "-emic" suffix of the word "phonemic." To carry out an *emic* analysis one began with a set of categories brought in by the scientific observer and then

tried to find out which of those categories really made a difference with respect to the way the natives understood and responded to things. The categories the scientific observer brought to the material prior to the *emic* analysis were called *etic* categories (after the term "phonetics', which is the study of the actual speech sounds produced in speaking a language).[1]

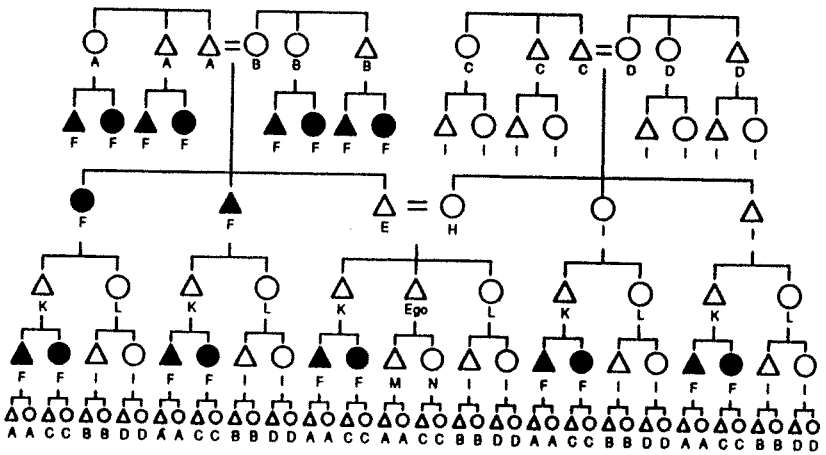
The importance of the idea of structure in the 1920s and 1930s was apparently quite general, and included mathematics as well as the physical, natural, and social sciences. Perhaps the importance of the concept of structure was due to the great power of such physical science achievements as the periodic table of elements and the analysis of the structure of atomic and sub-atomic elements. Certainly in the study of social institutions, the term "structure" was of central importance to social anthropologists. The term was used by social anthropologists in a variety of senses, ranging from "structure" as the organization of the actual activities of real people to "structure" as the abstract and never fully realized model that lay behind the actual activities of real people. The definition of "structure" was intensely contested, but its importance remained unquestioned.

The particular idea of structure promulgated by the Prague Circle had a major influence on many anthropologists. For example, the model of phonemic analysis greatly influenced Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, who met Jakobson in New York during the years of World War II. Levi-Strauss developed a method he termed "structural analysis" which he applied with imagination to kinship systems and to a variety of other materials such as myths and folktales. Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, and Victor Turner, in their different ways, developed similar agendas, called *symbolic anthropology* or *interpretative anthropology*, for the analysis of cultural symbols. Some discussion and critique of these alternative agendas will be presented in later chapters.

The feature analysis of kin terms

Among simple, non-literate societies, kinship constitutes the major social institution. That is, the roles that make up the social organization of the society are primarily kinship roles: in such societies most of one's positions are assigned on the basis of kinship and most of what one will be expected to do will be based on the kinship positions one is assigned. One of the things that ethnographers discovered early on was that the kinship systems in these societies were different than the kinship system of modern western society.

[1] There has been a good deal of dispute about just what the terms "etic" and "emic" mean. According to Marvin Harris (1968), "emic" analyses are criteria and explanations given by informants, while "etic" analyses are criteria and explanations used by the scientific observer. This is not what Pike meant by the terms at all. For example, if one asked a typical American informant what the vowels of English are, one would not get anything close to a real phon*emic* analysis, but rather a rough approximation to English orthography. Harris' confusion on this matter seems to be motivated by his irritation with the philosophic idealism implicit in much of the research on the structure of idea systems.



Key for Chiricahua kin terms

A cìnálé	E cìtàà	F cìdèèdèè'	K cìkìs
B cìt'cìné	H cìmáá'	I cì¥ó¥é	L cílà'
C cìtsóyé	M cì¥è'		
D cìtcó	N cìyát'cé'		

"c" is pronounced like the "sh" in "shell"
` represents a low tone
´ represents a high tone
¥ is a voiced velar fricative

Figure 2.1 Chiricahua kinship terms

Along with a different organization of kinship roles, these societies typically had systems of kinship terminology which were also different from those of western societies. With no outstanding exceptions, ethnographers were able to find "marriage" and "parent/child" relationships in every society. In every society these two basic genealogical relationships were organized into complex categories, such as *uncle* or *sister-in-law* in English. However, the complex kin categories of non-western societies frequently did not correspond to anything like the organization of kin terms in English, French, or German.

Consider the genealogical chart (Figure 2.1) for Chiricahua kin terms, taken from Bellah (1952:71). This chart is a standard format for presenting the organization of kin terms. The triangles stand for males, the circles for females. At the center of the chart is a person, called "ego," who is center of the entire network of relationships. Each of the females (circles) and males (triangles) are connected by a pathway of lines to ego. Vertical lines stand for parent/child relationships, horizontal lines stand for sibling relationships. The equal sign stands for a marriage relationship.

While the chart presents a diagram of ego's genealogical relationships to a variety of types of kin, it is an idealized diagram – a real person might have three sisters, no brothers, six father's brothers, etc. However, on the chart ego has exactly one brother, one sister, one father's brother, etc. The chart has been idealized so each *kind* of relationship is represented by a pathway to a single triangle or circle.

Under each circle or triangle is a letter. This letter stands for the actual *term* used by the Chiricahua for that kin type. For example, ego's father's brother is labeled with term F, *cìdèèdèè'*. Ego's father's sister is also labeled with term F, *cìdèèdèè'*. All the kin types labeled with term F have been filled in with cross-hatching to make visually apparent the wide variety of kin types to which this term applies.

It would be hard to find a translation term for the Chiricahua term *cìdèèdèè'*. Our term "uncle" would not be right, since the Chiricahua term includes such kin types as father's sister (whom we call "aunt,") brother's son (whom we call "nephew"), and brother's daughter (whom we call "niece"). Also mother's brother (whom we also call "uncle") is labeled with term I *cì¥ó¥é* by the Chiricahua, not *cìdèèdèè'*.

The chart presented here is for a male ego. The terms are almost the same for a female ego with two exceptions. First, the K and L terms are reversed for a female ego – a woman refers to her brother and male cousins by term L and her sister and female cousins by term K. Second, a woman's son's child would be referred to by term B and a woman's daughter's child by term D, rather than A and C as they are for a male ego.

It should be mentioned that the terms presented in the chart above are *terms of reference*, not *terms of address*. That is, the terms on the chart are roughly what an informant would answer if one asked "What is Jose Yaze, your mother's brother, to you?" The question can be put in a number of ways, but the idea is to get the name of the relationship. This term may differ considerably from the way the informant will "address" Jose Yaze when they meet – the informant may address him by his first name, "Jose", or perhaps by some special term of affection, or perhaps by the same term that the informant would use to "refer" to Jose Yaze when speaking of him to another person. Generally, anthropologists emphasize the analysis of terms of reference more than terms of address, which tend to be highly variable and often affected by situational factors.

The problem that Lounsbury and Goodenough solved was how to analyze the organization or structure of a kin term system. This method was called *componential analysis*, although the term *feature analysis* is more common at present. The procedures presented here are basically an adaptation of Lounsbury and Goodenough's methods developed by A. K. Romney.[2] These procedures consist of an explicit step-by-step process to carry out a componential analysis of kin

[2] See Romney and D'Andrade 1964.

terms. The first step in the analysis is to see what is common about each term. For example, let us begin with term F. There are twenty different kin types on the chart above which all are labelled by term F. What do they have in common?

To illustrate diagrammatically what the different kin types labelled F have in common, let us begin with a simple reduction of two kin types in a single more encompassing expression. As described above, it makes no difference whether *ego* is *male* or *female* with respect to term F. For example, a *male ego* calls his *father's brother* by term F, and so does a *female* ego. Since the sex of ego does not matter, the two expressions can be combined into a single form using *a square to stand for a person who can be either a male or a female* (see Figure 2.2). Continuing the analysis, both ego's father's brother and ego's father's sister are referred to by term F. In Figure 2.3 below the two kin types are presented and then combined into a single form again using the square to stand for a person who can be a male or a female.

What has happened in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 is that the sex markers indicated by the triangle and the circle have been replaced by squares because it does not matter with regard to term F whether ego is *male* or *female* and it does not matter whether one is referring to one's father's *brother* or father's *sister*. The sex difference at these points in the expression makes no difference. Romney calls this the *rule of minimum difference*. This is the first rule one applies in finding out what kin types have in common.

Two other kin types referred to by term F are brother's son and brother's daughter. Again it does not matter whether ego is male or female – both a man and a woman call their brother's son and their brother's daughter by term F. Figure 2.4 below illustrates these relations and combines them into a single form on a repeated application of the rule of minimum difference.

Looking at Figures 2.3 and 2.4, we can see that both summary forms can be combined into a single form, since the second form is simply the *reciprocal* of the first form. Or to put it in another way, if person *X* calls person *Y* by term F, then person *Y* calls person *X* by term F. In English, only the term "cousin" is completely reciprocal – if someone calls you "cousin," you call them "cousin." For Chiricahua the use of reciprocal terms is much more common than in English. This next step of combining kin types is presented in Figure 2.5.

Romney calls this the *rule of reciprocals* – where two expressions labelled by the same term differ only in being reciprocals of one another, they can be combined into a single expression.

There are still a number of kin types labelled F that are not included in our current summary expression. All of ego's father's parent's sibling's children are also labelled F. (Here I have already applied the minimum difference rule – the complete list of kin types would include ego's father's mother's sister's son, ego's father's mother's sister's daughter, ego's father's mother's brother's son, ego's father's mother's brother's daughter, etc.)

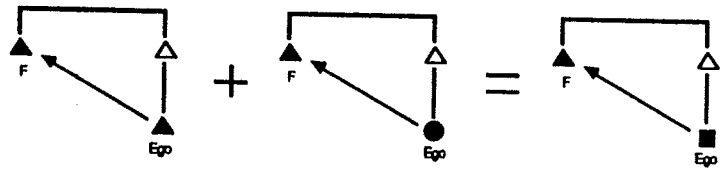


Figure 2.2 Sex of ego reduction of term F kin types

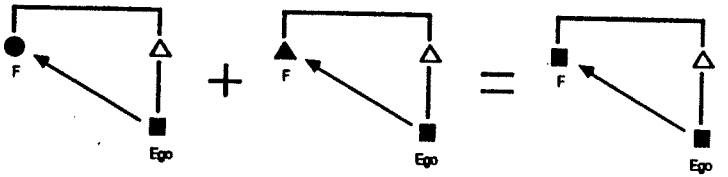


Figure 2.3 Sex of alter reduction of term F kin types

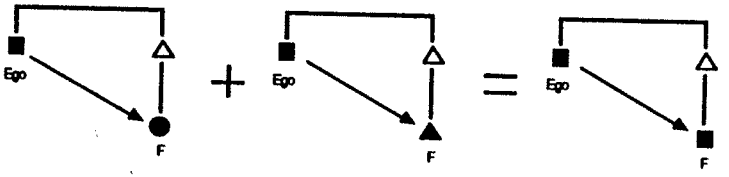


Figure 2.4 Further sex of alter reduction of term F kin types

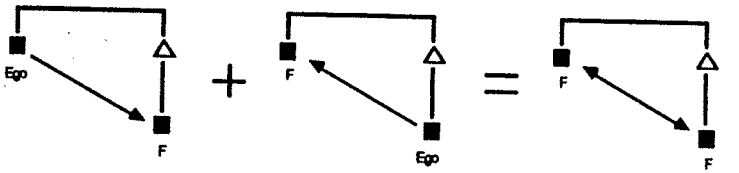


Figure 2.5 Reciprocal reduction of term F kin types

Another set of kin types labelled F that are not included in our summary expression are all of ego's male cousin's children. (Here again the rule of minimum difference has been applied to summarize the full set of kin types which would include ego's father's brother's son's son, ego's father's brother's son's daughter, ego's mother's brother's son's son, etc.) If we diagram these two sets of terms, it can be seen that they are, in fact, simple reciprocals of each other, and can be combined into a single expression by the reciprocal rule (see Figure 2.6).

We have now collapsed the different kin types labelled F into only two expressions. The two expressions, presented in Figure 2.7, differ only in the

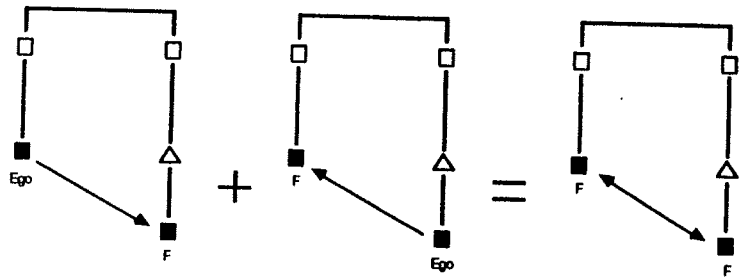


Figure 2.6 Further reciprocal reduction of term F kin types

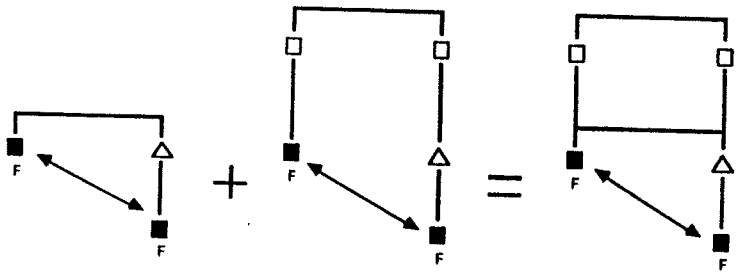


Figure 2.7 Sequence difference reduction of term F kin types

presence of additional genealogical links in one expression that are not present in the other expression. These two can be combined because of the fact that they are labelled by the same term, indicating that these additional genealogical links are a difference that makes no difference. Romney calls this kind of reduction the *rule of sequence difference*. The summary expression shows *two* paths by which persons labelling each other with term F may be related; in the ascending direction one path goes from ego's father to his sibling, in the ascending direction the other path goes from ego's father to his parent and then to his parent's sibling and finally to ego's father's parent's sibling's child.

The final summary expression can be read – the following kin call each other by term F: *ego's father's sibling or cousin and the reciprocal of that relationship*. In examining the summary expression we see that the crucial thing is that the relationship go through a *male* link between generations. In a more technical fashion we might define term F as *a consanguineal relative of my parent's generation who is on my father's side of the family*, or, for the reciprocal descending relationship, *a consanguineal relative who is the child of a man of my generation*.

At this point the reader may have begun to experience a kind of vertigo which overtakes people who are not used to thinking about exotic kinship relationships. It is really not that the material is complicated. It is mostly quite simple

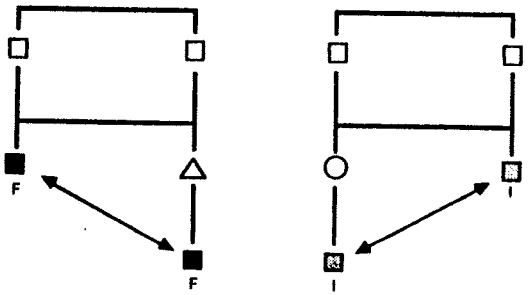


Figure 2.8 Reduced expressions for Chiricahua terms F and I

– when one thinks in other categories. Our own English groupings of kin – the "aunts and uncles," the "cousins," the "grandparents," our "parents," our "siblings" – seem easy and obvious to us. The way the Chiricahua divide the world seems more complex and confusing. However, the principles in both cases are equally simple.

We have seen how a term can be reduced to a single expression (or diagram) which collapses the distinctions which do not make a difference and retains the distinctions which do make a difference. Using the same strategy of combining forms, term I can also be reduced to a single expression or diagram. The reduced expressions for term F and term I are presented together in Figure 2.8. Comparing terms F and I it can clearly be seen that the terms are identical in all respects except that term F is distinguished by relations through a *male* while term I is distinguished by relations through a *female*. Both terms include only *consanguineal relatives* (not linked through any relatives by marriage), both terms involve kin who are separated by exactly *one generation*, both terms are *self-reciprocal* (if you call someone F they call you F, if you call someone I they call you I), and both terms involve *collaterals* (that is, relatives like English "aunts" or "nieces" who are related to one through a *sibling link*).

The point of doing the reductions so that each term is represented by a single diagram is to allow a direct comparison between terms. In looking at the full kin term chart for Chiricahua the differences between term F and term I are not obvious in the way they are in Figure 2.7.[3]

[3] The diagrammatic scheme used here is not the only way in which kin types can be represented. Romney developed a notational system using "m" for male, "f" for female, "a" for a person of either sex, "=" for marriage, "+" for a child to parent link, "–" for a parent to child link, and "o" for a sibling link. Such a system is much easier to write than the diagrams presented above. Despite its ease of use, Romney's notation system did not become standard for the field, perhaps because the letters conflicted with the standard notational system (e.g. the standard notation for ego's mother's brother's daughter's husband is "MBDH" or sometimes "MoBrDaHu", while in Romney's notation it is "a + f o m – f = m"). With Romney's notation symbols can be rewritten and manipulated in an algebraic manner, making a kin term feature analysis much less complex and laborious.

What the analysis of the two Chiricahua terms does is to give us a simple model of how an analysis of meaning can be done. Note that the list of the different kin types was *not* considered to be the meaning of the term. Recall that the kin types are all the particular relationships labelled by a term – kin types for term F, for example, are ego's father's brother, ego's father's sister, ego's mother's sister's son's son, etc. Using the language of Charles Morris, the kin types are the *denotata* of the term – the things to which the term "refers." What we have done is to analyze the list of kin types for a particular term and try to find out what the referents all have in common that contrasts with the kin types of other terms. We will call these properties by which one term contrasts with another *distinctive features*.

The distinctive feature that distinguishes between term F and term I is the kind of link between kin on one generation and kin on the generation above. This is quite different than English kin terms for "uncle" and "aunt" where the sex of the linking relative does not matter – only the sex of the person being classified. A standard format to show the feature composition of term F and I would be:

F = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	collateral male link
I = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	collateral female link

Besides terms F and I, the other generation one terms are just as they are for the English terms *father*, *mother*, *son*, and *daughter*. Given the simplicity of these terms, reduction by various rules to a single expression is not necessary. The feature composition of these terms is:

E = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	direct	ascending	male
H = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	direct	ascending	female
M = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	direct	descending	male
N = consanguineal	1 generation from ego	direct	descending	female

The feature *direct* contrasts with the feature *collateral*. Direct relatives are those that are linked to ego through parent/child links only, no sibling links being present. For these four terms the female vs. male link distinction is not relevant.

Unlike the English system, the Chiricahua system does not distinguish between siblings and cousins. Brothers, sisters, and cousins are all called by the same terms. The distinction of sex is also made quite differently among the Chiricahua. There are two terms, K and L. Term K refers to those siblings and cousins who are of the *same sex* as ego, while term L refers to those cousins and siblings who are of the *opposite sex* from ego. The feature composition of these terms is:

K = consanguineal	same generation as ego	same sex as ego
L = consanguineal	same generation as ego	opposite sex from ego

The final set of terms, A, B, C, and D are grandparent/grandchild terms. There are four of these terms in Chiricahua. They are like the F and I terms in that in all cases the terms are self-reciprocal – if you call someone by term A, that person calls you by term A. Thus the distinction we make between ascending generation terms (*grandmother*, *grandfather*) and descending generation terms (*granddaughter*, *grandson*) is not made for these Chiricahua terms. Nor does the sex of the relative make a difference – each of the four terms refers to both males and females.

The important feature which distinguishes these four terms is, like terms F and I, whether the link to ego is *through* males or females. However, for these terms the *mother's side* vs. *father's side* distinction is *iterated*, so that term A, for example, is a relative two generations away from ego connected to ego through *two male links*. Thus term A applies to relatives linked to ego through *ego's father's father* going up the generational chain, or to relatives linked to ego through a male of ego's generation followed immediately by another male in the next generation. What is also different about these four terms compared to the F and I terms is that the *collateral* vs. *direct* feature does not apply – it does not matter whether A is ego's father's father (a direct relative) or ego's father's father's sibling (a collateral relative). The feature composition of these terms is:

A = consanguineal	2 generations from ego	male–male link
B = consanguineal	2 generations from ego	male–female link
C = consanguineal	2 generations from ego	female–male link
D = consanguineal	2 generations from ego	female–female link

Given that such an analysis does tell us about the meaning of Chiricahua terms, of what general use is it? One answer concerns the understanding of Chiricahua society. The Chiricahua ranged across southern New Mexico, Texas, and northern Mexico. With the acquisition of the horse, most Apachean groups, of which the Chiricahua were one, turned to raiding. The raiding complex put the Apachean peoples in conflict first with the Mexican government and then with American settlers and the US Army. In the period from 1861 to 1886 the Chiricahua were reduced from more than 1,000 to 400 people. After Geronimo's capture, and the removal of the tribe to Florida, there was an eventual resettlement of the Chiricahua to the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico.

Among the Chiricahua, the most important functional social unit was the *local group*. Each local group had a war leader, and the most important war leader functioned as the leader of a larger collection of local groups called a "band," which intermittently acted as a unified group in warfare. Each local group had a geographical base in a fairly impregnable mountain area. The local group served as the main economic unit for raiding and multifamily activities. Within the local group, the matrilocal extended family, composed of a number

of nuclear families related through marriage, formed the main domestic unit. The matrilocal extended family was typically composed of a woman and her husband, one or more of her daughters and their husbands, along with their children. The matrilocal extended family was the primary economic unit, organizing hunting and gathering on a daily basis. Food was prepared in the mother-in-law's dwelling and distributed from there to other family members. Each nuclear family had its own dwelling.[4]

This brief description makes some sense of the distinction between terms F and I, and between the grandparent terms A, B, C, and D. Apparently the Chiricahua saw the world outside parents and children as divided into two halves – the relatives through one's father in contrast to relatives through one's mother. This contrast corresponds roughly to the way the kinship world was divided because of the matrilocal extended family. This distinction is further elaborated with respect to the grandparents, partitioning the world of relatives into father's father's side, father's mother's side, mother's father's side, and mother's mother's side, reinforcing the basic *side* distinction even further. However, this distinction was not made with respect to the same generation terms of *same* vs. *opposite sex* sibling or cousin – it is often the case in kinship systems around the world that same generation terms do not make as many distinctions as the parental generation terms.

This use of componential or feature analysis of kin terms is intended to give a sense of the mental world – the "real" categories – by which a culture made sense of its family and kin organization. Where kinship is the major social institution in a society, such an accomplishment has great ethnographic utility. Scheffler's work on Australian kinship terminologies, for example, uses a variety of this kind of semantic analysis to deal with a whole series of complex issues still surrounding Australian aboriginal kinship and social organization.[5] For those interested in pursuing further the semantic analysis of non-western kin term systems, Harold Scheffler and Floyd Lounsbury's book *A Study in Structural Semantics* is an excellent source.

A feature analysis of English kin terms

A kin term analysis is perhaps less centrally informative about American culture than about Australian aboriginal culture, since kinship is just one of many social institutions in our society. However, it is easier to present a feature analysis of English kin terms than Australian or Chiricahua kin terms because we, as English speakers, have already learned the distinctive features of this system. It would be possible to proceed in the same way we did with Chiricahua terms F and I, first reducing all the kin types to single expressions,

[4] See Bellah 1952 and Opler 1937 for descriptions of Chiricahua society and culture.
[5] Scheffler 1978.

		direct		collateral	
		male	female	male	female
G2	+	grandfather	grandmother		
	-	grandson	granddaughter		
G1	+	father	mother	uncle	aunt
	-	son	daughter	nephew	niece
G0		brother	sister	cousin	

Figure 2.9 Feature analysis of English kin terms

then discovering the characteristics which distinguish each of the expressions. Such an exercise is carried out in Romney and D'Andrade's (1964) paper "Cognitive Aspects of English Kin Terms." However, such reductions are not necessary for a non-technical presentation of English kin terms. A feature analysis, using a box diagram representation of English consanguineal kin terms is presented in Figure 2.9.

The *male* vs. *female* contrast is present in all terms except *cousin*. All terms are specific with respect to generation, although *cousin* in its extended sense can refer to higher or lower generation relatives.

The feature of *generation* refers to the absolute number of parent/child links between ego and the relative. Thus both an *uncle* and a *nephew* are in generation 1 because there is an absolute difference of one parent/child link between them. The difference between an *uncle* and a *nephew* is that the first is in an *ascending* generation, while the second is in a *descending* generation.

The contrast between *direct* vs. *collateral* relatives involves the distinction that collateral relatives are linked to ego through an *ascending sibling link*, while direct relatives are not linked to ego through an ascending sibling link. By this definition, ego's own siblings are not collaterals, while cousins are. One's *great-aunts* and *great-uncles* (the *brothers* and *sisters* of one's *grandparents*) would, of course, be collaterals, since they are linked to one through an ascending sibling link.

Not all analysts of English kin terms agree with the analysis presented here. The reasons for preferring this analysis will be presented later in a discussion concerning the psychological reality of feature analyses.