

外国语文教学与研究

2

主编 石坚

上海外语教育出版社

SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS



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序

金秋十月,一个收获的季节,《外国语文教学与研究》第二辑与广大读者见面了。

我们编撰这部论文集的目的在于繁荣外语界的学术研究,展示外语教学研究领域的成果,推动外语教学改革的深入发展。从入选的47篇论文来看,其内容涵盖了外国文学和文化研究、外语教学理论的研究与实践、外国语言及语言学理论研究、翻译理论研究与实践等领域。这些论文既有宏观的评述,也有微观的探讨,体现了作者的独创性见解,反映了四川地区高等学校广大外语教师锐意进取、勇于创新的精神。面对繁重的教学任务和有时不尽人意的教学环境,他们始终没有放弃学习,而是努力理解并掌握外语教学与研究的理论和知识,在做好教学工作的同时十分严肃认真地对待学术问题,把科研看作提高自身整体素质的有机组成部分。他们用掌握的理论来指导教学实践,又用实践中的所得来丰富理论知识,这种理论学习和具体实践的相互促进大大提升了教师的基本素质和专业修养。从他们的科研论文中,我们既可以看到他们在知识方面的广度,又可以看到他们在理论方面的深度。他们的研究提出了一些值得我们共同思考的问题,他们的成果为我们提供了有益的启示和崭新的思路。

随着我国外语教学改革的发展,特别是《大学英语课程要求》的实施和108所院校外语教学模式改革的不断深入,外语教育的质和量都将出现新的飞跃。这就要求广大外语教师以求实创新的精神在各自的领域中不断积极探索,取得更大成绩,而这也是我们编写这部论文集的希望所在。

适逢《外国语文教学与研究》第二辑出版之际,谨向一贯支持四川
高等学校外语教育工作的上海外语教育出版社表示衷心的感谢。

《外国语文教学与研究》编委会

2004年10月

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从人类语言学角度看亲属称谓

Kinship Terminology: An Anthropological Perspective

摘 要: 论文从人类语言学的角度研究亲属称谓,认为不同类型的亲属称谓是人脑创造出来并在特定历史环境中应用的历史和社会事实。文章讨论了亲属称谓的定义,区分了亲属类型和亲属称谓词,指出亲属类型用于描述亲属关系范畴的无文化差异的基本关系,而亲属称谓词是描述亲属关系类型的词,具有文化差异。文章回顾了摩尔根、克劳伯、罗依和史内达研究亲属称谓的历史,并根据上一辈亲属称谓将亲属称谓系统分为直系型、世辈型、二分旁系型和二分合并型,根据表亲称谓将亲属称谓系统分为奥玛哈、克劳、易洛魁、苏丹、夏威夷和爱斯基摩等六种类型。文章通过分析亲属称谓的普遍性和相对性总结了全文。

关键词: 亲属称谓; 亲属称谓词; 亲属称谓系统

Abstract: Approaching kinship terminology from an anthropological perspective, this paper sees different types of kinship terminology as historical and sociological facts created and applied by the human mind in specific historical contexts. It discusses the definitions of kinship terminology, and makes distinctions between kinship types and kinship terms. It points out that kin types refer to the basic and culturally free relationships used to describe the actual contents of kinship categories while

kin terms are culturally different labels for categories of kin. It then reviews the history of kinship terminology studies done by Morgan, Kroeber, Lowie and Schneider. Kinship terminology systems are classified into four types of lineal, generational, bifurcate collateral and bifurcate merging based on first ascending generational terminology and six types of Omaha, Crow, Iroquois, Sudanese, Hawaiian and Eskimo based on cousin terms. It concludes by analyzing universalism and relativism in kinship terminology.

Key words: kinship terminology; kinship terms; kinship terminology systems

I. Kinship Terminology

Kinship is the blood (consanguinity) or marriage (affinity) relationship between persons; also, in anthropology and sociology, a system of rules, based on such relationships, governing descent, inheritance, marriage, extramarital sexual relations, and sometimes residence. Kinship is one of the complex systems of culture and the most basic principle of organizing individuals into social groups, roles, and categories. Kinship plays a role in the daily lives of people in different ways.

All human groups have a kinship terminology. Kinship terminology refers to names or labels used to classify relatives, e. g. mother, father, aunt, uncle, brother, sister. Kinship terminology system is a system of linguistic categories for denoting kinds of relatives (Keesing, 1975; 150). When anthropologists say that types of kinship terminology are not "discovered" empirically but are "constructed," that does not mean that the construction is arbitrary and that the human mind is not guided by empirical facts. The

different types of kinship terminology are historical and sociological facts created and applied by the human mind in specific historical contexts. They are not the invention of scholars.

One important aspect in the investigation of kinship terminology is the distinction between kin types and kin terms. Kin types refer to the basic uncategorized relationships that anthropologists use to describe the actual contents of kinship categories. They are supposedly culturally free, etic components. A kin type is a designation that is assigned to each individual relationships, such as consanguineal relative (blood relatives), affinal relative (relatives by marriage), fictive kin (personal relationships modeled on kinship, based on adoption, religious practice and honor), lineal relative (kin in your direct line of descent, i. e. any of ego's ancestors or descendants) and collateral relative (a biological relative who is not a lineal one) (*Kin Types and Kin Terms*, 2003). Each relationship can be described with a letter or letter string. For example, the letter M stands for mother, F for father, Z for sister, B for brother, D for daughter, S for son, H for husband, W for wife, MZ for mother's sister, ZS for sister's son and MZD for mother's sister's daughter.

Kin terms are different from kin types. Kin types are culturally neutral. An anthropologist uses these types to begin a description and analysis of any kinship system prior to a consideration of principles of classification within that system. On the other hand, kin terms are the labels for categories of kin that include one or more kin types. They are the set of names that people actually use to designate and address their relatives. Kin terms constitute a culture's kinship vocabulary, a catalog of the names that are assigned to relatives. Different societies of course use different labels to designate their kin. Often the particular system of categorization gives clues to a culture's principles of social organization and construction of

social roles. They are emic structures and vary across cultures (*Kin Types and Kin Terms*, 2003). The terms uncle, cousin, grandfather, peculiar to English terminology, are not kin types but categories which include more than one relationship and therefore more than one kin type.

Kinship terminologies vary in different societies from as few as twelve to more than fifty terms. For example, English kinship terminology is in the middle and contains the following principal terms: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister; uncle, aunt, nephew, niece; cousin (differently elaborated in different English speaking cultures); grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter; granduncle, grandaunt, grandniece, grandnephew (in many dialects); great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother etc. and great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather etc. There are also the affinal terms: wife, husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, mother-in-law and father-in-law as well as uncle and aunt.

Kinship terminologies provide a means of classifying relationships with other people for every person in the society. Many terminologies have different terms for male siblings, often based on relative age, and many have different terms for father's mother and mother's mother. Therefore, when different kinds of genealogical relationships are merged into one category, such as in English terminology, all male siblings being denoted as brother, or all mothers of parents being called grandmother, the information that might have been needed to describe kinship relationships is reduced. In most kinship terminologies the large number of genealogical relationships can be denoted with several dozens of terms that make up human kinship terminologies. What makes this possible is using a limited number of classificatory criteria to define terms, limiting the distance that counts as a denotable kinship relationship, and the fact that the use of these terms is relative to each individual in the

society. That is, every person in a society will denote a different person as mother, father etc. Kinship terminologies are thus systematically limited by classificatory restrictions and relative application.

II. History of Kinship Terminology Studies: Morgan, Kroeber, Lowie and Schneider

Of all topics within anthropological linguistics, kinship has probably attracted the keenest and most sustained interest (Foley, 2001). Kinship studies deal with cultural interpretations of social relationships and social groups that are formed among people who stand in biological or quasibiological relationships to each other.

The scientific study of kinship began with the publication of the famous anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*. Morgan had amassed a huge amount of data on kinship terminology, and using this he worked out a classification of kinship systems. Morgan assumed that human society had evolved through a series of stages from primitive savagery to civilization, and he saw kinship terminologies as reflecting these stages. Morgan made two major distinctions between kinds of kinship terms: classificatory terms, which subsume a relatively large number of biological kin types, and descriptive terms, which subsume relatively small numbers of types and which preferably have unique referents (Morgan, 1871). He imposed this scheme on whole terminological systems. He then fitted the typological scheme to his evolutionary framework. He ignored the problem of how to analyze degrees of extension or how to discover the semantic criteria by which people made distinctions between kindred.

Another famous anthropologist Alfred Kroeber exploded the notion of any kind of simple classificatory/descriptive typology. He

looked at the principles that were used in separating kinds of kin and categorized kinship terminology into eight basic principles used cross-culturally to label kin roles; generational levels; kin connected by marriage and by biology; collateral and lineal relatives; sex of relative; sex of speaker; status or life condition of relative; age level; sex of the person through whom the relationship is established (Kroeber, 1909:77 – 84).

In addition to the eight basic principles, another anthropologist Lowie added a ninth, polarity (Lowie, 1917). He examined differences employed to distinguish kin. For example, in English and American kinship terminology, father and son differ only in generation. Father and father-in-law differ in that father-in-law is an affine. Father and uncle are distinguished by collaterality. In English, cousin ignores the distinction concerning sex of the relative concerned. Some groups have different terms depending on the sex of the speaker — male speakers use different terms from female speakers. Decedance assigns a different term to a relative depending on whether the relative is alive or dead. The criterion of relative age recognizes that within a generation people differ in age. In English and American kinship system an uncle may be traced through either parent and a grandparent is a parent of either of parents. Polarity recognizes that a relationship consists of two parties, and thus two terms, e. g. aunt, niece. In English, polarity is almost always acknowledged. In some kinship systems, however, this is not the case; it is, for example, fairly common for grandfather and grandson to be called by the same term.

After Lowie, some relativist figures see kinship terminologies as being structured in social terms. Individuals are classified into particular kin categories because of their membership in certain social groupings. Relationship terms denote social categories and not “degrees” of kinship. The kind of status that a set of relationship

terms denotes is peculiar to the society in which it is applied (Schneider, 1980, 1984).

III. Kinship Terminology Systems

Many societies have a special way of referring to groups of relatives by a single term. For example, the English society uses the "Eskimo kinship terminology system." And English people refer to their members of the "nuclear family," mother, father, brother and sister with terms different from those they use for other relatives. They think it is natural. However, it separates the nuclear family from a whole category of other relatives like aunts and uncles. In other societies they distinguish between different kinds of "cousins," different kinds of "aunts and uncles," sometimes on the basis of whether they belong to your kinship group or not, sometimes on the basis of whether you can marry them or not. Kinship terminology systems separate people into different categories and determine how you are going to treat them and what treatment you can expect from them. Kinship is one way of organizing society.

Morgan's analysis was one of the first major efforts to understand the structure of cultural items through systematic cross-cultural comparison. Morgan identified five basic systems of kinship terminology: Iroquois, Crow, Omaha, Hawaiian, and Eskimo (Morgan, 1877). Each type is named after a group among whom Morgan first identified the system in question, but all the types of systems are found in many different societies around the world. Each system of kinship terminology encodes different principles of descent. Morgan associated each descent principle with different stage in unilineal cultural evolution.

Standard American middle class kinship terminology falls into Morgan's "Eskimo" (bilateral) category. In a bilateral kinship

system, there is not a terminological distinction made among lineages or descent groups. In standard American middle class kinship terminology, people don't distinguish lineages or descent groups by using different kin terms; my mother's brother and my father's brother are both simply "my uncle" and my cousins are my cousins regardless of which side of my genealogy they appear on. That is not to say that people living in a bilateral kinship system cannot make such distinctions by other means.

On the basis of the first ascending generational terminology, kinship terminology systems can be classified into four kinship terminology systems (Lowie, 1917):

1. Lineal: Parental generation kin terminology with four terms: one for M, one for F, one for FB and MB, and one for MZ and FZ;
2. Generational: Kinship terminology with only two terms for the parental generation, one designating M, MZ, and FZ, and the other designating F, FB, and MB;
3. Bifurcate collateral: Kinship terminology employing separate terms for M, F, MB, MZ, FB, and FZ;
4. Bifurcate merging: Kinship terminology in which M and MZ are called by the same term, F and FB are called by the same term, and MB and FZ are called by different terms.

Based on cousin terms, there are six major types of kinship terminology systems named after cultures that practice the form: Omaha, Crow, Iroquois, Sudanese, Hawaiian and Eskimo (Murdock, 1960).

The Omaha system is similar to the Iroquois and is in fact a classic example of a bifurcate merging system of kinship. Ego uses the same categorization for father, father's brother and the same categorization for mother and mother's sister. However, there is a significant difference in cousin terminology. Parallel cousins are

merged with siblings, while cross-cousin terms are quite peculiar and defy generational divisions. Ego uses the same terms for his mother's brother's son as he does for his mother's brother and the same term for mother's brother's daughter as for his mother. This lumping of generations is referred to as skewing. Such Omaha terminologies are associated with societies stressing common membership of relatives traced through a line of ancestors in the male line.

The Crow system is a mirror image of the Omaha. Ego generally employs a bifurcate merging pattern but applies a skewing rule to lump relatives within his father's female line. Thus father's sister's son gets the same term as father, and father's sister's daughter gets the same term as father's sister. This system is generally found in societies stressing common membership of relatives traced through a line of ancestors in the female line.

The Iroquois system is based a principle of bifurcate merging. Ego distinguishes between relatives on his mother's side of the family and those on his father's side and merges father with father's brother and mother with mother's sister. Accordingly, father's brother's children and mother's sister's children (parallel cousins) are merged with brother and sister. This terminology occurs in societies that are organized on the basis of distinctions between father's kin and mother's kin.

The Sudanese kinship system is the most complex of all kinship systems. This system has the largest number of labels for Ego's kin. Because of the complex nature of kin labels and status, the Sudanese system is referred to as a "descriptive kinship system." It assigns a different kin term to each distinct relative. Ego distinguishes between his father, his father's brother, and his mother's brother. There are potentially eight different cousin terms. This system is generally correlated with societies that have substantial class divisions.

Hawaiian system is the least descriptive and merges together many different relatives in a few categories. In the Hawaiian system, kinship differences are distinguished at the generational level. There is a generation of parents and a generation of children. Ego distinguishes between relatives only on the basis of sex and generation. Thus there is no uncle term; mother's brothers and father's brothers are included in the same category as father. All cousins are classified in the same group as brothers and sisters. This form of kinship is most common in societies where economic production and child rearing are shared.

The Eskimo system makes no distinction between relatives traced through a line of ancestors in the male line or the female line. This system recognizes all parents' brothers and sisters as aunts and uncles. All children of parents' siblings are cousins. Another feature of Eskimo terminology is that nuclear family members are assigned unique labels that are not extended to any other relatives, whereas more distant relatives are grouped together on the basis of collateral distance. Because of predominant marking of immediate family members, Eskimo terms usually occur in societies which place a strong emphasis on the nuclear family rather than extended kin or larger kinship groups. In this system, the nuclear family usually represents an independent economic and social group.

IV. Conclusion: Relativism and Universalism in Kinship Terminology

Kinship reckoning in any case involves the use of genealogies but a genealogy does not necessarily show how people are biologically related; it is a ramifying chain of parent-child links and marital ties that is recognized as such by members of a society under study in accordance with their cultural criteria for doing so. Then,