

***METHODS FOR
DISCOVERING WORLDVIEWS***

**GROUP THE FOLLOWING WORDS
INTO LARGER CATEGORIES**

TREE

ANGEL

WOMAN

ROCK

COW

WHALE

BIRD

GIRL

LION

GOD

GRASS

FISH

DOG

MAN

BUSH

VIRUS

SAND

DEMON

ANCESTOR

DONALD DUCK

MARTIAN

RAKSHASA

ETHNOSEMANTIC ANALYSIS TO DISCOVER WORLDVIEW THEMES

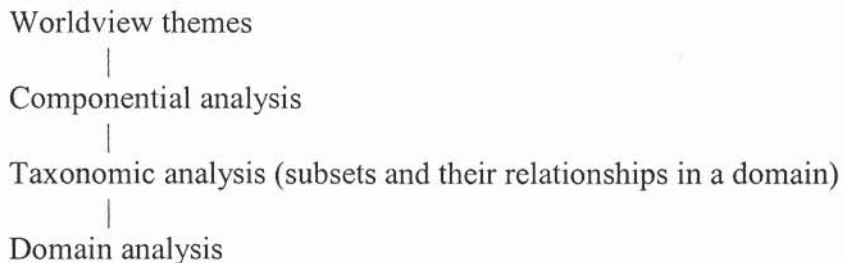
1. Definition: Ethnosemantics is the analysis of the conceptual categories of a culture in a particular domain of information (for example: the study of the color categories, the major symbols and steps of a funeral, or the parts of a car). In examining such taxonomies it provides us with the emic categories with which the people think, and therefore insight into the world in which they live.

2. The method:

2.1 **Categories in a domain are gathered**. These are elicited from observing an event, or by questions such as, "What kinds of X are there?" or "What kind of thing is X?" By this we can chart a cultural domain. Sometimes word associations are used to get at folk taxonomies. The informant is asked to say a number of words he/she associates with a particular category.

2.2 **A hierarchy of levels**. Here we ask questions such as "Is X a kind of Y?" By this means we can arrange categories into a hierarchy of generalizations. This mapping of a domain is known as componential analysis.

2.3 **Worldview themes**. From componential analysis it is possible to deduce some of the basic worldview themes of a culture (Werner and Schoepfle).



Example: Levels of Igede Friendship [*igwuh*]-West Africa. (each of these categories has several subcategories).

Ill-responsive Friendship [*oligwuh ojwugwume*]
Friendship with Outsider [*oligwu olabadoweh*]
Casual Friendship [*oligwuh ochakala*]
Ritual Friendship [*oligwuh oliyaka*] "age-mates"
Supportive Friendship [*oligwuh odubwo*] "helper"
Intimate Friendship [*oligwuh olikeje*] lit. "liver-friend"
Ideal Friendship

3.5 Use Two: Using terms of reference and address to study social systems:

Kinship terms are categories people use to 'see' their social world. They do not necessarily correspond with blood lines. All cultures use social ways to deal with biological problems such as childlessness, and death of a spouse. Nor do kinship terms correspond with kinship categories in other cultures. Even such words as 'father' and 'mother' mean very different things in different cultures.

3.51 A study of terms people use when referring to kinsmen helps us understand the role relationships between them. To do this, gather terms people use when referring to kin and the occasions on which these are used. Then analyze the data.

Compare the semantic patterns with social roles and behavior. Note that the terminology does not correspond one-to-one with social structures. There may be a culture lag in changing the terminology.

Example:

	Grandfather=Grandmother		Grandfather=Grandmother	
Uncle=Aunt	Uncle=Aunt	Father=Mother [father-in-law= mother-in-law]	Uncle=Aunt	Uncle=Aunt
Cousins	Brother	EGO=[spouse]	Sister	Cousins
	Niece	Nephew	Son	Daughter
		Daughter-in-law	Son-in-law	Niece Nephew

Kinship terms differentiate between one or more of the following (Kroeber):

- generational levels (father, son, grandmother, grandchild, etc.)
- age levels in the same generation (older and younger brothers, older and younger uncle)
- lineal and collateral relationships (direct blood line: father vs. blood line to side: uncle)
- sex of relative (brother, sister, uncle, aunt)
- sex of the speaker (in many societies men speakers use different terms than women)
- difference of sex of person through whom relationship is established (father's brother is differentiated from mother's brother).
- blood versus marriage (son vs son-in-law)
- status or life condition of person through whom the relationship is established (living or dead, married or single).

3.52 A study of the terms people use when addressing kinsmen shows us much about the way they relate to each other. To do this, gather the terms ego uses in

addressing various kin members, and the occasions on which each might be used.
Analyze them.

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AMERICAN PROVERBS

1. You get what you work for, and you work for what you get.
2. Work out, not rust out.
3. Try, try, try again.
4. Cleanliness is next to Godliness.
5. Technology can fix anything.
6. Wealth equals success which equals the blessing of God.
7. All problems have solutions.
8. Right to comfort.
9. Youth and beauty are prized, poor are looked down upon.
10. Busy, activist.
11. Bigger is better.
12. Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.
13. Work is a means to the end of leisure.
14. Get ahead -- upward mobility.
15. Everyone is out for him/herself.
16. Don't waste time.
17. The early bird gets the worm.
18. God helps those who help themselves.