

The **Sudanese** system is the most descriptive system. Anthropologists, starting with Morgan, have distinguished classificatory terminologies from descriptive terminologies. Classificatory terminologies denominate with one term several categories or classes of people (such as 'uncle' in the English terminology), while descriptive systems have the characteristic of naming differently every category of kin. The term for cross-cousin in a Dravidian system is typically a classificatory term, while that for MB is a descriptive term (see Fig. 9.1). In fact, it is not possible to distinguish entire systems as being either descriptive or classificatory, since all have some elements of description and some elements of classification. The Eskimo system (and the English terminology is of this type) discussed below, for example, was long considered to be a descriptive system. In fact it has classificatory terms, ↵ since the word 'cousin', for example, actually covers four categories of people: matrilineal cross-cousins (MBD/S), matrilineal parallel cousins (MZD/S), patrilineal cross-cousins (FZD/S), and patrilineal parallel cousins (FBD/S). The Sudanese system, though, is one of the most descriptive systems, if not a totally descriptive one. Every single kin category is named using a distinct term.

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The **Eskimo** system is found in Europe and, as its name indicates, among the Inuit peoples. Marriage is between genealogically unrelated people, meaning that there is no direct connection between consanguinal and affinal terminology, at least before marriage. The complex distinction between consanguinity and affinity will need to be discussed in more precise ways below. Another characteristic of the Eskimo system is that bifurcation does not occur. 'Uncles' can be found on the father's side as well as on the mother's side.

**Crow** and **Omaha** are sometimes considered distinct systems. They are, however, more likely to be interpreted as specific variations of the Dravidian system (see Kronenfeld 1991). The particularities of Crow and Omaha systems is that they operate what is called skewing. In certain contexts, a matrilineal cross-cousin is called by the same term as a FZ, and a patrilineal cross-cousin like a MB. In other words, two generations are skewed into one and the same term.

The general system of terminology and its pragmatic usages (and adaptations) in a particular language or dialect can only be determined if the researcher actually records kin terms and their contextualized usages. Besides simply listening to conversations, there exist two basic methods for recording these terminologies. The first is the genealogical method, the second the tabular method. In the genealogical method, the researcher prepares a genealogical sheet (see Fig. 9.1 above) in which are drawn all possible categories starting from an Ego (the speaker): his younger brother, his younger sister, his older brother, his older sister, his father, his mother, his mother's older sister, his mother's younger sister, his mother's older brother, etc. The sheet needs to cover at least five generations: Ego's, his parents', his parent's parent's, his children's, and his children's children's. It is however advised, if possible, to go beyond these five generations. The researcher then sits with an individual, notes the name, the place and date/time of recording, as well as the gender, age, place of residence, social role, etc. of the speaker. It is also useful to write down who else is sitting around and listening, and perhaps contributing to the conversation.

This needs to be undertaken separately with several people, establishing a representative sample covering various characteristics of the speaker: age, gender, social position and role, residence, member of a social category, etc. At least four questions need to be asked of each such person for each of the individual categories drawn on the genealogical sheet: (1) How do you call that person? (2) How do you refer to this person when you talk to someone else? (3) How does this person call you? and (4) How does this person refer to you when talking to another person? Questions 3 and 4 will record what are called the 'reciprocals'.

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In English, if you are ↵ a male, the reciprocal of 'father' is 'son', since this is how your father will call or refer to you.

In some cases it may be difficult to ask direct questions unless one already knows a good deal about the society. In these cases, one needs to use artifice to ask the question. A useful indirect way for obtaining the terms for each position is to work through the genealogical sheet, taking women as the pivotal point. You