

- A number of generic taxa may be aberrant, however, and are conceptually seen as unaffiliated (i.e. are not included in any of the life forms). Aberrance may be due to morphological uniqueness and/or economic importance. Examples vary widely between cultures: baobab trees and camels are morphologically unique for many cultures in tropical Africa, while grasses/grain and cattle raised for food are economically important in many Eurasian cultures. Each of these may be generic taxa that are unaffiliated with other generic taxa because of their outstanding or unusual roles in society.
 - Generic taxa are the basic building blocks of any folk taxonomy, are the most salient psychologically, and are likely to be among the first taxa learned by the child, e.g. *dog, taro, oak, banana, ant, clay*.
8. Specific and varietal taxa are less numerous than generic taxa, and occur in small contrast sets typically of two to three members. Varietal taxa are rare in most folk biological taxonomies.
 - Both specific and varietal forms are distinguished from one another in terms of a few, often verbalized characters.
 - Taxa of the specific and varietal rank are commonly labelled by secondary (vs. primary) lexemes, e.g. *three-needle pine, Mexican evening primrose, blue heron*.
 9. Intermediate taxa occur as implied members of the category 'intermediate' and usually include taxa of generic rank that have residual characteristics. Residual characteristics are unusual features that distinguish either a monotypic taxon (a weird/unusual sort of thing) or a group that is placed together because of a single (unusual) characteristic. These are not often named but are implied in cultural conversations. However, some can be mentioned.
 - Examples that are named: *spiders, root crops, and pigeons*.

The nine principles above are slightly enhanced from the Berlin et al. (1973) outline. For more clarity, see the longer explanation in Martin (2004).

p. 285 Ralph Bulmer (1974) independently verified and proposed very similar concepts, although Berlin's (1992) theoretical structure is cited by most ethnobiologists. Holman (2005) has verified the generalized, cross-cultural ethnobiological ↪ hierarchical folk classification systems for plants and animals showing evidence that they are different from other domains. Holman (2005: 71) states that 'cross-cultural regularities suggest that taxonomic judgements are not entirely determined by culture'.

There is a key assumption implicit in the above that we will accept for the purposes of the balance of this chapter: that cultures are similar enough to be comparable, and that naming and classification systems have not primarily emerged as individual or culture-specific practices but are rather part of generalized human traits. Furthermore, from a biological perspective, we will accept the assumption that taxonomic diversity in the world is discontinuous in its spectrum of characteristic distributions, and that humans are able to recognize discontinuities (see also Turk et al., Chapter 16 below). The result is that humans group like things together in categories as described above using the discontinuities as indicators of domain circumscription. If these assumptions are correct (and some argue that they are not: see Ellen 1996; 2003a; 2003b; 2006; 2007), then comparisons may be made by information learned between individuals and/or groups of people at differing scales (e.g. families, communities, 'cultures', 'languages'). Further, the results then inform us about variations in the human condition and human responses to differing cultural, psychological, physical, and biological environments.

Note that this type of research emphasizes comparisons. Although it is possible to use a non-comparativist approach to research, even non-comparativists must be aware that the results of their work, once published,