Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach
Dr. Anindita Sahoo
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture - 16
Lexical Typology Continued

So now, let us go back to the to the everything and having a word for everything discussions that we were in a couple of minutes ago.

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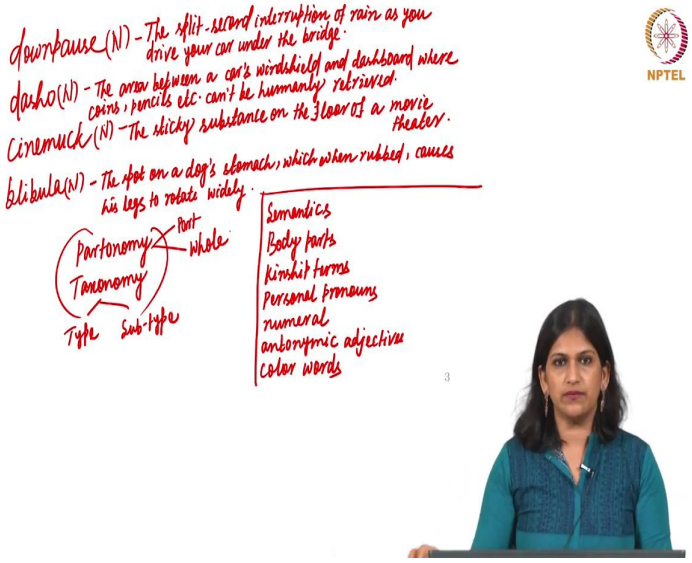

So, this the hand example that I gave you, that would help us to understand two terms. One is part, the other one is whole, or you can say partonomy and taxonomy ok. So, this partonomic and taxonomic relation you have to think about it from a type-subtype or part-whole relation. Taxonomy would be type-subtype relation and partonomy would be part and whole relation.

When you say type and subtype, let us say lentils, or we can say grains. So, grains means you can have multiple grains. You might have wheat, you might have rice, you might have barley, you might have let us say what else I am forgetting the grains for the moment. The relation between grain and paddy, or grains and wheat, these are the taxonomic relation. One is type, the other one is subtype. Wheat is a type of a grain. Wheat and grain are in a taxonomic relation with each other, but when we talk about hand and then the palm. So, your palm is a

part of your hand and your face is a part of your body, your legs or your thighs are part of the leg or the limb. So, these are in the partonomical relation with each other.

So, when you are thinking about the part-whole relation; that means, you are talking about partonomy and when you are talking about the type-subtype relation, you are talking about the taxonomy. Partonomy and taxonomy are one of the very important things to understand when you are trying to approach lexical typology, because lexical typology could be approached from a taxonomic view, also can be approached approached from a partonomic view. So, when you approach it from a taxonomic view, you are thinking about type-subtype relation and when you are approaching it from the partonomic view, you are thinking about the part and whole relation.

With this information about having a word for everything, let us go to the second question. The first thing or the first feature of the ideal vocabulary is that there is a word for everything and we have gone through the discussion, it is not practically possible. Then the second question was that do you think the sounds of the word or let me go back.

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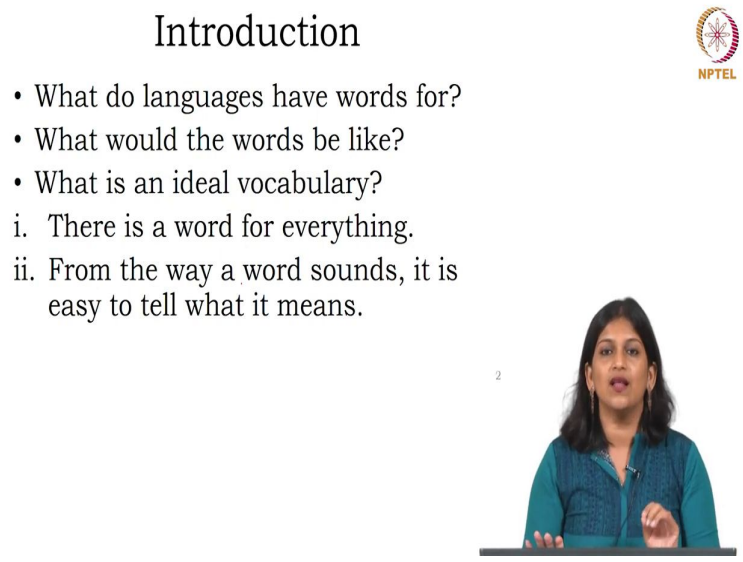

From the way a word sounds it is easy to tell what it means. Do you think that is possible in each case, that the way the word sounds the hearer can actually understand what does it mean, is it possible in the languages? Why don't you think about it. If I say 'book', do you

think the sound of the book gives you any idea about a book? Or when I say tree. So, the sound of a tree do you think does it give you any idea about the tree? Now the question or the concern is that how far this argument can hold true.

Do you think the sounds of words reveal their meanings? I would say no, but there are certain words from where you can actually reveal the meaning, but not always. And when you can reveal the meaning, these are called onomatopoeic words. Onomatopoeia refers to a pattern where the phonetic form of a word resembles its referent.

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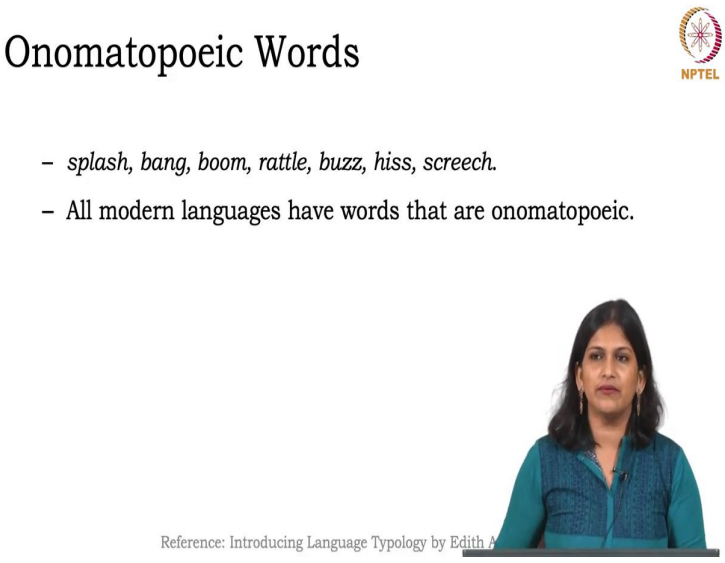

When I say meowing, meowing of the cat means the cat is actually making some sound. The sound made by the cat is actually meow. So, that is an onomatopoeic word ok.

Rippling of water could be slightly onomatopoeic at times I think because the ripple. Not sure actually, but then at least we can think about the words like meowing or words like let us say bow wow. When you say bow wow, that means, it is actually the sound made by a particular animal. And the other very common word is buzz. When you hear the word buzz, you actually get the feeling of buzz. So, buzz, boom; when you utter the word boom, you can hear the booming sound in the head. So, these are the words which could be considered as onomatopoeic words.

These are the words which have their meaning associated with their sounds. By listening to the word you can actually figure out the meaning. but that does not hold true in most cases. The phonetic form cannot possibly resemble the shapes and colors. Onomatopoeia can only apply to the words that designate sounds. When I say buzz; that means you are thinking about a sound.

Crash; that means, there must be a sound, boom there must be a sound, meow-meow, bleat. So, these are the sounds. But how about if I say red, do you think by hearing the sound red you can actually figure out how the color looks like? Do you think by hearing the word purple, you can imagine how the color would look like or you can hear the color? Not really. You cannot do that.

So, unless this is related to sound, onomatopoeic words do not really work. That means, when you are thinking about words and their corresponding meaning, it is only the onomatopoeic words which will have their meaning associated with their pronunciation. So, the sound is attached to the meaning of the word. When you hear the sound, you can infer the meaning. But that is limited to a very very tiny set of words which we call onomatopoeic words. Otherwise it is not going to be helpful for the listener to come up with some conclusion that this particular word might need or might mean this.

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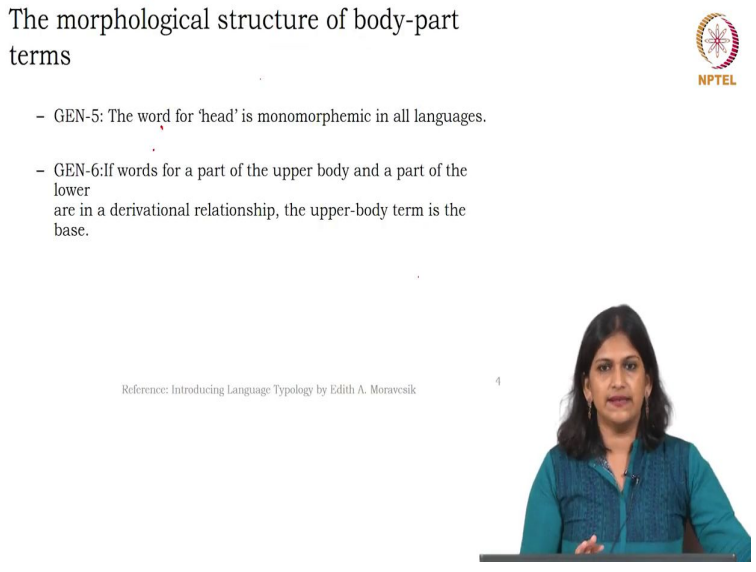

So now, we realize that there is nothing called an ideal vocabulary. The two preconditions which we discussed, one is having a word for everything and second by listening to the word you can find out the meaning of it, that does not hold true in most of the languages or in most of the cases or in most of the instances in any given language.

Now, since we understood that there is nothing called ideal vocabulary, because we cannot have words for everything, the first point. The second point we cannot infer the meaning of words from its sounds. We have to find out how typologically these words or this lexical system that could be different from language to language and how can we put them in different types. For this, I would follow what Moravcsik has been talking about as far as lexical typology is concerned.

The discussion on semantics of 6 different things. Let me see how much I can go through it or otherwise I would suggest you to read the book more and get back to me if there is any query. But I will try to cover up at least some generalizations which would help us to understand lexical typology better. So, what are the 6 domains of semantics discussion we would have? We are going to find out the universals or we are going to find out the typological discussions on body parts and we will try to draw some generalizations, kinship terms, related to the family relations, then we have personal pronouns, we have numerals, we have antonymic adjectives and finally, we have the color words.

So, now, let us go to the first generalization as far as lexical typology is concerned. Through this course I would primarily talk about a few generalizations which would help us to understand language types. So, when you say all languages have something; that means, all languages belong to one type and in case we find out some difference or some variation, we will go for some other types. But for the moment, we will try to figure out some generalization, some common features available in human language as far as lexical typology is concerned.

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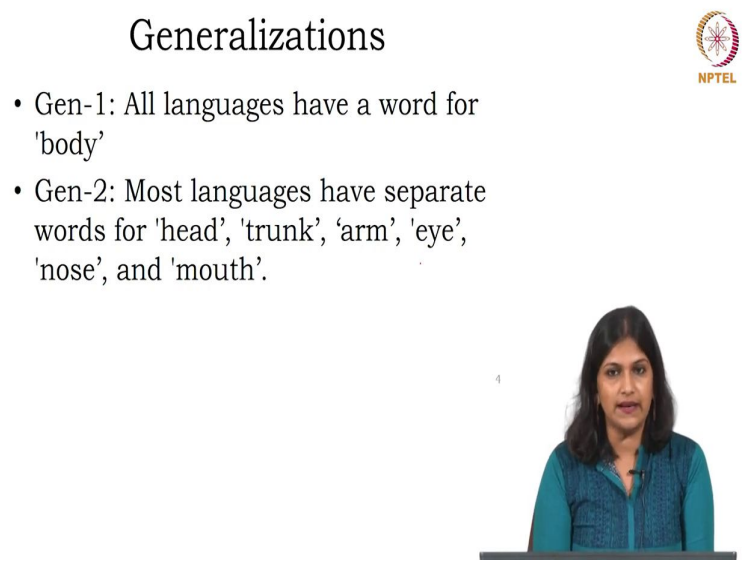

So, what is the first generalization? The first generalization is that all languages have a word for body. The body could have different parts, partonomically. So, your hands, your legs, your eyes, your mouth, your tongue, your knee, your ankles, all of them these are the parts of the body.

May be not all languages have words for all of your body parts that you know in English or in your first language or any other language that you know. But at least all the languages in the world would have a word for body. May be some languages do not have a word for knuckle, may be some languages do not have a word for eyelid or eyelashes.

These are the parts of the entire part called body. So, this is the part and whole relation. May be not all languages have words for these things, but for sure all languages will have a word for body. That is a first generalization that you need to focus on as far as lexical typology is concerned right. Now the concern is that all languages have words for body, how would they account for the words for the parts like the foot, the ankle, the leg, the knee, the thigh? These are the parts. Whether all languages see these as separate units or they consider it just a whole body.

As we have discussed earlier, the terminologies related to body parts do follow the natural segmentation of the body. That means, every language will have words for like head, trunk,

arm, leg, eye, nose, mouth, fingernail, toenail, these are like the distinct body parts. So, maybe there would not be a word for eyelashes, but definitely there would be a word for eye. So, the part and whole relation would exist. Now, let us focus on the first generalization first, then we will go to the second.

The first generalization says all languages will have a word for body and the second generalization says most languages; again look at the difference between all and most; most languages have separate words for head, trunk, arm, eye, nose and mouth. But notice the difference as I mentioned, this may not hold true for all languages, but it definitely holds true for most languages. So, generalization 1 and 2 are related to each other.

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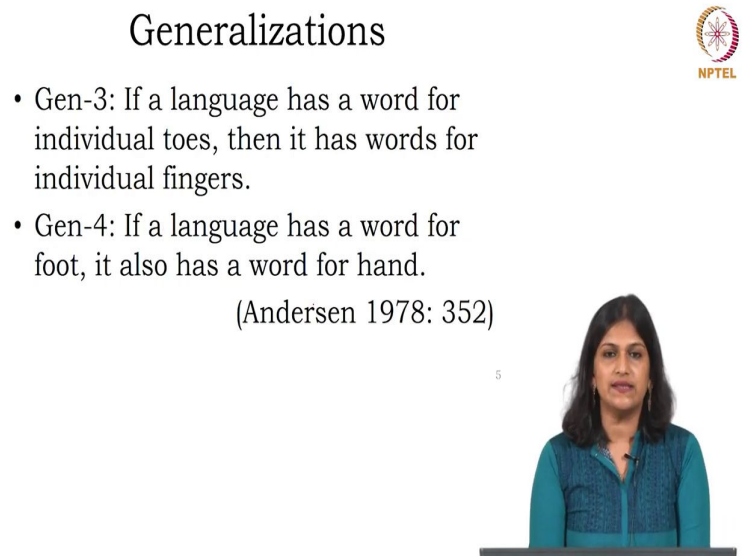

All languages have body parts, most languages have this. Now let us move to generalization 3. In the third generalization, if a language has words for individual toes, then it has words for individual fingers. All of these generalizations are coming from Andersen 1978.

That means, in any given language of the world, if it has words for individual toes. Let us say we have 10 toes and it has words for all of them like each individual toe, then it must have words for individual fingers, but not the other way around. We might think about English. So, English might have names for the fingers, but it may not have the names for the toes, that

could be possible. May be the languages are like that. But it is not possible that there are words for the toes, but no names for the fingers, that is not possible.

So, read the generalization 3 carefully, it will be easier for you to understand. What is it written? It is written if a language has words for individual toes, then it has words for individual fingers. So, which one is more rudimentary here? Fingers. So, fingers have names, toes have names ok. Fingers do not have names, toes do not have names. But you can say fingers have name, toes do not have names, that is fine, but you cannot say toes have names, but fingers do not have names, that does not seem to be possible as far as generalization or universal feature of language is concerned. So, that is why if a language has words for individual toes, it must have words for the individual fingers, that is the generalization number 3.

Now what is the generalization number 4? The fourth generalization is if a language has a word for foot, then it also has a word for hand. Which one is more rudimentary here? The hand. So, if it has a word for the foot, then for sure it has the word for the hand. So, this is the generalization 3 and 4. Remember 1 said all languages have a word for body. Generalization 2 most languages have words like arm, finger or eyes or nose or mouth. Third generalization if a language has a word for individual toes, then it must have words for individual fingers. And fourth generalization if a language has a word for foot, then obviously, it will have word for hands.

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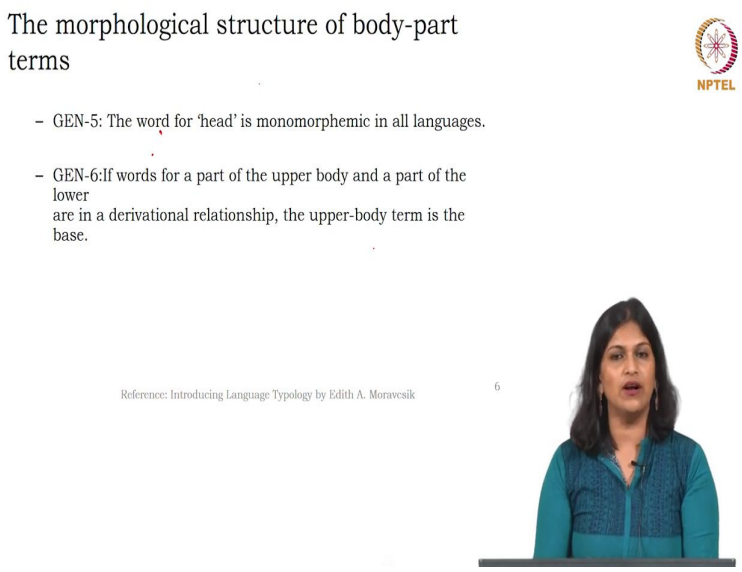

Now, let us come to the fifth one, these are all related to the body parts, the lexical items used for the body parts. So, what does the fifth generalization says? It says the word for head is monomorphemic in all languages. Here, the morphology comes into existence. I will discuss in detail in a while, after this unit gets over. So, monomorphemic means there is only one morpheme. So; you cannot break the word into any part. So, the word for head you think about all the languages that you know and you experiment this. The word for head is always monomorphemic in all languages. It has only one morpheme. That is the fifth generalization.

What is the sixth generalization? If words for a part of the upper body and a part of the lower are in a derivational relationship, the upper body term is the base. What does the sixth generalization say? It says if words for a part of the upper body and the part of the lower body are in derivational relationship, that means, the lower body parts are derived from the first one or they are in the derivational relation with each other, which one is the base? The base is the upper part and the lower part is the derivation of the upper one.

It is not the other way round. Let us say if English has a word let us say the upper part of the body. So, the head and then the leg let us say there is a language which has a derived word for the leg from the head, then the word for head is actually the base, and the lower part

words have been derived from that. So, the base or the root would be the upper part. So, that will be the generalization 6. These 6 generalizations are based on the body parts.

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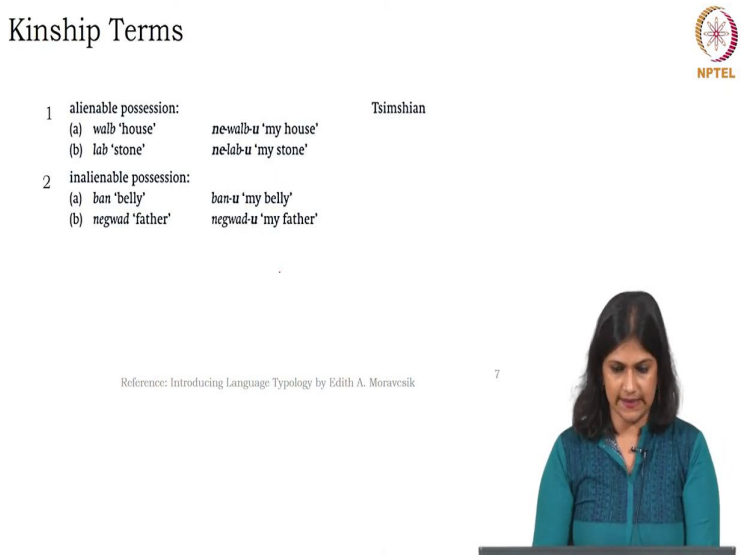


Now, we are moving to the kinship terms. Kinship terms means related to the family and other alienable and inalienable possessions. So, when you are thinking about kinship terms, it is primarily related to me and others like your relationship with other people or your relationship with people or with other things in the surroundings. So, when we are trying to figure out the kinship terms and the generalization that would draw from there, we have to focus on the alienable and the inalienable possessions over here.

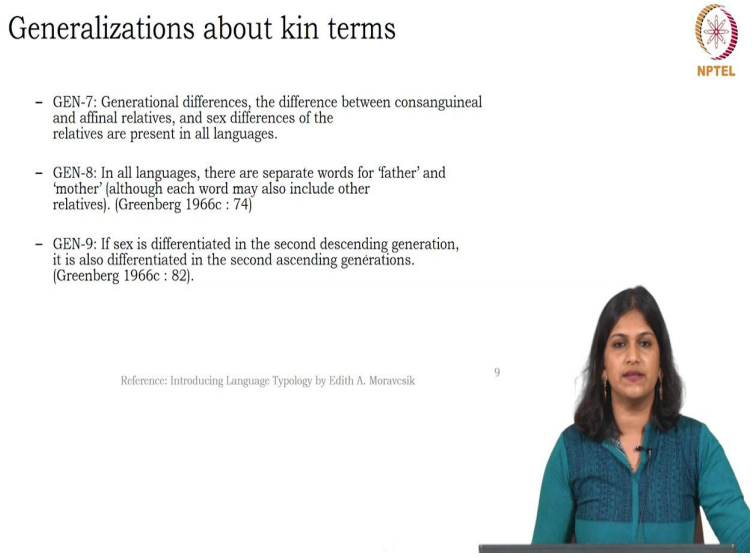
Here is a set of data from Tsimshian language. Let us have a look at the alienable and inalienable possession examples. This is an American Indian language Tsimshian. If I can pronounce it properly. This is an American Indian language of Northern British Columbia spoken in Northern British Columbia. Basically when you are thinking about the words like house or stone, in these cases, you would when say my house; that means, this is an alienable possession, when you say my father, that is inalienable possession.

When you are thinking about the difference between alienable and inalienable possessions, you would see that in alienable ones, there would be a prefix and there would be a possessive suffix. But in case of the inalienable one, there is no prefix rather there is a suffix, so that is a

type. So, Tsimshian would belong to a language type where the words for alienable possessions would require a prefix and a suffix.

House is walb, my house is ne - walb- u. So, ne- is the prefix, -u is the suffix. Lab means stone and when you write my stone, then you have to write ne – lab - u. So, that is going to be alienable. But in the same language, when you are talking about inalienable possessions, then let us say belly. So, ban is belly, but when you say my belly you do not say ne- ban- u, rather you say ban u. You are deleting the prefix. Let us say father, father is negwad, let us say negwad is father when you say my father then you would say negwad-u you are not going to say ne negwad u by following the alienable style of writing. So that means, this language type follows a certain pattern to find out or to talk about kinship terms.

So, the kinship terms when they are related to alienable possessions, they would involve a prefix and a suffix. But when you try to figure out the inalienable possessions, this does not involve any prefix, rather it would have a suffix. So, what is the crosslinguistic generalization that we can find out through this? So that means, the crosslinguistic generalization is that the existence of the kinship terms they are unrestricted or implicational. We will talk about the implicational and then the unrestricted universals later, but we realize that there are certain words at least in case of kinship terms. There are different types the morphological structure would be different, but the universal feature is that kinship terms are universal in all languages, but how do they get manifested on the basis of their relation with the alienable and the inalienable one that varies from language to language. (Refer Slide Time: 22:15)



I will straight away go to the generalizations which can be drawn from the kinship terms. So, this set of generalizations that I am talking about once we are done with the first 6 which are related to the body parts, we are moving to the kinship terms and the kinship terms if you ask me about the existence of the kinship terms, there are multiple reasons by which we get the kinship terms. In the previous set of discussion, in the body parts, we have two primary divisions: one is taxonomic, the other one is partonomic.

But in case of kinship terms, besides the taxonomic-partonomic which we are not really going to focus here for the moment, but rather we are going to focus on the gender of the person who is being involved here and in that gender system, we have generational differences something like father and son, they both are males, but then there is a generational difference. There is another criterion called lineal or collateral. When you say lineal and collateral, obviously, that is related to the lineal bonding and then the collateral bonding and then there could be a difference between consanguineal and the affinal.

When you say affinal, that means, it is related to the blood relation, the family bounding; when it is consanguineal, then this kind of a relation has come through the marriage system. So, there are different ways by which the kinship terms are created. This lineal versus collateral, consanguineal versus affinal or generational versus gender, these kinds of differences or these kinds of segregating factors would help us to find out or would help us to come up with a few more generalizations.

Let us look at the 7th generalization. Here, 7th generalization says the generational differences are basically related to the generational differences in such cases, in case of the generational differences, the difference between consanguineal and affinal relatives and sex differences of the relatives are present in all languages. That means, you have a word for the male parent, then you would surely have a word for the female parent.

In all languages, the male parent would have a different word on the basis of the sex and the female parent would have a different word. Also, in case of the consanguineal and affinal relatives, if you have a word for your mother's mother then you should also have a word for the father's mother. If you have a word for the mother's father then would you would surely have a word for the father's father, or through the marriages when you have a word for father-in-law then you will also have a word for mother-in-law. The generational differences and the sex differences they are there almost in all languages.

Then the 8th generalization says in all languages there are separate words for father and mother and I told you already this is a part of these 2 generalizations. These are related to the sex distinction. If you have a word for the male parent, then obviously, you will have a word for the female parent.

And, the 9th generalization says if sex is differentiated in in the second descending generation, it is also differentiated in the second ascending generation. Let us say descending generation is going to be grandfather, father, and son; ascending generation you start from the father, then grandfather, then great grandfather. If you have a different word for the male great grandfather, then you would surely have a different for the female great grandmother. So, the female parent of your father then you will also have a word for the male parent of your father. There are different terms for the descending as well as for the ascending generation for both male and female.

So, this comes from these generalizations. They come from the Greenbergian typology or the Greenbergian discussion on universals related to kinship terms. So, today we have discussed the generalizations that involve body parts and the generalizations that involve the kinship terms. There are more into it when we are thinking about the kinship relations and we will discuss it in the coming session.Thank you.