

the rates of phonetic change undoubtedly differ very considerably in different languages, so that obscuration of an originally descriptive term may be brought about more readily in one than in another. How long a descriptive term for a culture concept of undoubted antiquity may linger on in a language which tends to keep its analysis of descriptive terms transparent is illustrated by the Athabaskan word for glove or mitten. Among the Athabaskan tribes of the Mackenzie valley we can hardly doubt that the mitten was an old element of their material culture; hence we would rather expect the term for mitten to be a non-descriptive term than a compound yielding readily to analysis. As a matter of fact these tribes use a word which simply means "hand-bag" (Chipewyan *la-djis*, Hare *lla-dji*, Loucheux *nle-djic*). We may put up with this when we recollect that Athabaskan shows a more than ordinary fondness for synthesis, but we are certainly given a jolt when we find that exactly the same transparent compound turns up in Navaho as the term for mitten (*la-djic*).

Changes in Terminology.

* Even when the method is in the main restricted to a comparison of culture words in the same language, a number of cautions are necessary. In the first place, a culture concept may prove to be old in spite of the fact that its designation is demonstrably of recent origin, for the older, perhaps non-descriptive, term may have become obsolete and given way to a later formation. One of the most potent sources of such changes in terminology is the widespread custom of tabooing words for a certain period after the death of a person whose name was identical with, compounded of, or even merely similar to such words. Normally the old word is reinstated after the taboo is lifted, but it must often have happened that the newer, generally descriptive, term lingered on out of habit alongside the older one and eventually even replaced it altogether. That the present term for an old culture concept is not necessarily the primary one in the particular tribe studied is demonstrated by the analogy of many evidently secondary terms for non-cultural concepts which must have been familiar to the natives from time immemorial. Thus,