a unifying language around the world for comparative discussions in science. All of these names (scientific or common) circumscribe identifiable units or taxa that people can recognize. When comparing the taxa recognized by one group of people with those recognized by another group they may (a) have about the same circumscription (have the same constituents) or (b) include one considered to be grouping several taxa of the other into a single taxon (a 'lumper'), and thus the other is considered relatively to be dividing one taxon of the first into multiple taxa (a 'splitter'). These divisions are analytically relative to each other and are not based upon a standard other than one's point of reference. This is true not only of folk knowledge but also of scientific species concepts.

12.3.2 Gloss assumptions

Muller and Almedom (2008) have noted the dangers of gloss terms describing traditional foods, and how these may easily come to depict aspects of culture in unrealistic terms. They focused their analysis on the concept of 'famine foods', but a similar examination of almost any rapid interpretation applied by a researcher to describe a complex cultural phenomenon of human interaction with one or more biological organisms or environments will have similar pitfalls. There is not an easy recommendation for dealing with this problem other than to suggest that it is best to gather as much data as possible, with primary data being the best and to apply as much local expertise as possible within the interpretation of results to minimize misrepresentations.

Probably the best advice for those who are non-experts on a subject is to be as clearly descriptive as possible, including both etic and emic observations (see Diamond 1991) and minimal interpretations. For example, if a disease with a certain traditional name appears to be 'breast cancer' but the researcher documenting the term and gloss is not a physician seeing a patient and collecting a specimen to verify this, then it is best *not* to give this as the name, but merely to describe the traditional symptoms of the illness and say nothing about the assumption of breast cancer. The very important reason for not making the assumption is that placing information such as this within a dictionary could lead later to misdiagnoses based upon information that may or may not be true. The same is true for less critical cases, such as naming of birds,
p. 296 plants, soil types, and ecosystems. ↳ A clear description, when joined with physical evidence, can be deciphered by a subsequent expert collaborating scholar, while a bad assumption may not be retracted.

12.4 Discussion

Each of the five methods for the collection of information described here may be used alone or in combination, and each has certain advantages and disadvantages. Free-listing is the most simple and common method, but it is problematic in that it is dependent upon human memories and subsequent ability to find samples of what was being discussed/remembered at an earlier time. However, free-listing can be the most creative because it is not constrained by the physical reality around people and therefore they are able to include examples of taxa that are now extinct, rare, out of season, or otherwise not present but still part of their cultural memory. It is not uncommon for free-listing exercises to result in some data points that lack supporting physical evidence; these problematic data must be either set aside as irreproducible or discussed as suspect. An artefact interview is merely a particular sort of free-listing exercise with a tangible object for the participants to focus their thoughts on. As such, it has similar strengths and weaknesses to be considered.

Inventory interviews, on the other hand, have a high level of reproducibility because the specimens are prepared a priori and therefore none are lacking at the completion of the data collection process. In addition, comparisons between interviews are unambiguous because there is little doubt that the participants were exposed to exactly the same physical stimuli to formulate their response. However,