

### 16.2.2.2 Field interviews

Field interviews are carried out to identify the set of landscape terms and to clarify their meanings and distinctions, associations, and usage. A variety of different approaches have been used.

p. 377 An initial approach (used in the Yindjibarndi case study and to a certain extent in the Seri case study) is to discuss the terms collected in the first stage with native speaker collaborators on an individual basis or in pairs or small groups, to see whether the terms are recognized, whether their spellings are correct (if the language has a standard writing system), and whether there are alternative or additional terms for similar features. Terms may be written on a whiteboard and/or discussed verbally, and the sessions may be audio and/or video recorded. General features of the language and history of contact with linguists, or other ethnographers, might also be discussed in these initial sessions.

p. 378 It is also possible to interact with collaborators directly in the field. For instance, during fieldwork with Navajo speakers, Mark, Stea, Turk, and Topaha spent several hours with each collaborator in the field phase, driving around in the landscape and encouraging them to talk about the particular features encountered. These field trips were in parts of their territory well known to the individual collaborators (Fig. 16.1). The field interviews were exploratory, and the researchers tried to minimize the degree to which they directed the discussion. During the trip, the collaborators were asked to describe the landscape in their language, with the aid of a translator (usually a family member) if necessary, and in English, and to discuss the names of features. This material was audio recorded and photographs of key features that were discussed were taken as the trip progressed. In most cases, a GPS record of the route and locations was taken. A transcript of the field trip description is being made, and will be combined with notes taken by the researchers during the trip and with the photographs and locations. This integrated material can then be examined for landscape terms, compared to the term lists from the dictionaries, and used to provide a more informed understanding of landscape concepts of that language group and how 'generic' landscape terms relate to proper names used for landscape features. Some of the photographs taken during these field interviews were later used in photo interpretation sessions (§16.6.2.2.3).

**Figure 16.1.**



Field trip with Navajo collaborators and project consultant, September 2005, at Blue Canyon, Navajo Reservation, Arizona (from left to right, Lorraine Holyan, Andrew Turk, Carmelita Topaha, and Larry King).