

16.2.2.4 Semi-structured follow-up

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Detailed analysis of the landscape terms used by the collaborators in the second and third stages has allowed the researchers to revise their previous understanding of landscape concepts in the languages studied. However, it has been important to ↵ conduct follow-up interviews, photo interpretation sessions, and field excursions to clarify confusions, probe for extra meanings, and evaluate the quality of interpretations. In the Yindjibarndi case study, the whole field research process took seven years and some key understandings emerged only from the most recent fieldwork.

16.2.2.5 Reporting back and getting feedback

It is very important for both practical and ethical reasons to report back to native language communities on a regular basis. In the Yindjibarndi case study, an initial version of a photo-illustrated dictionary of landscape terms was distributed to participating individuals and organizations early in the research process to encourage feedback. More recently a full-colour draft dictionary of 100 terms has been distributed, via the Yindjibarndi cultural organization Juluwarlu. The researchers have made a similar commitment to distribute digital copies of a photo-illustrated dictionary of Navajo landscape terms to each of the 100+ chapter houses on the Navajo Reservation. As mentioned earlier, O'Meara and some of the Seri collaborators designed and produced a children's workbook involving various landscape features found in the Seri territory.

16.2.3 Methods not yet implemented

The authors have employed several variants on the use of visual methods in landscape research. Our respondents have been asked to identify, and to provide terms for, landscape features on photographs, or to establish landform categories by sorting large numbers of photographs into groups. Yet another approach would be to have members of the target group take photographs, show them to their elders, and request oral descriptions, which, in some cultural groups may result in extensive stories about the significance of a given landform, relating it to history and/or to traditional stories. The advantage of this emic approach is that it is more culturally sensitive. This approach could provide important contextual information for landscape terms, and enhance understanding of the significance of terms obtained by other means.

A video (or animation) presentation featuring a person (or animal) moving through a series of different sorts of landscape features could be produced. Collaborators could be asked to view this video presentation and provide a verbal narration (in their language) which would later be translated and landscape terms identified.

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To the best of our knowledge, three-dimensional relief models have not been used in ethnolinguistic fieldwork for elicitation in the landscape domain. However, such models have been used successfully in participatory community land-use ↵ planning in developing countries (e.g. Wisner, Stea, and Kruks 1991; Rambaldi and Callosa-Tarr 2002), and hold promise for elicitation of landscape terms. Virtual reality renderings of terrain might also be used, but would probably only be practical in laboratory settings.

16.2.4 Relevant methods used by other researchers

Researchers at the MPI have very extensive experience in linguistic fieldwork, and have assembled an extensive set of fieldwork materials and apparatus (see Majid, Chapter 2 above), as well as software for data analysis and storage (e.g. ELAN).