Linguistic and non-linguistic regions in perceptual dialectology
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Map-drawing tasks ask non-linguists where they believe distinctive dialect areas are located. But what are these ideas based on? Inoue (1996) finds correspondence of hand-drawn dialect maps to “ordinary geographical maps” and “stereotypical… geographic labels”. So: to what extent are beliefs about dialect regions just a relabeling of nonlinguistic beliefs about general-purpose regions?

Methodology:
People in two regions of New York State were asked to perform two map-drawing tasks:

- What do you think are the major regions of the state?
- Where are different accents or ways of speaking located?

Example responses:

Comparison: smallest region containing NYC dialect region maps general-region maps

Overall results: dialect maps
- Broad consensus (88%) that the New York City area is a dialect region
- No other dialect region was drawn by more than 28% of respondents
- No systematic difference in dialect maps between NNY and CNY

Overall results: non-linguistic maps
- Several commonly identified regions/boundaries:
  - Downstate area around NYC; North Country; Central NY; Western NY
  - NNY much less likely to draw compact Downstate region than CNY

Conclusion: Non-linguists’ responses on where dialect regions are are not just regions that are culturally salient for other reasons—people do seem to have geographic opinions on linguistic questions that can differ from more generic geographical opinions on what regions of importance exist.