

Listen Up!

New book by NCSU professors looks at black speech

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A new book by two N.C. State University linguists challenges a half-century of sociolinguistic theory and takes a new look at the history of the controversial English dialect Ebonics, also known as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). The book, titled "The Development of African American English," was written by Dr. Walt Wolfram, William C. Friday distinguished professor of English, and Dr. Erik Thomas, associate professor of English. The book was scheduled to be released in England last month.

It asserts that African-American speech is derived both from British-based dialects, which would have been adopted by blacks as they were enslaved and brought to colonial America, and vestiges of an African-based Creole language markedly different from British-based dialects.

Based largely on research conducted in Hyde County, N.C., Wolfram and Thomas call into question the dominant linguistic theories of the past 50 years. The book concludes that earlier African-American speech was much more regional, but that it coexisted with

language roots from its African heritage.

A team of researchers from N.C. State conducted about 150 interviews of African Americans and whites in Hyde County, a small, rural county of mostly marshland that is home to some of the earliest settlements in North Carolina. European-American and African-American communities settled there as early as the turn of the 1700s. A distinguishing linguistic characteristic of Hyde County is the Outer Banks dialect, a recognized, European-American dialect studied in Wolfram's previous work on Ocracoke Island, and exemplified by pronunciations such as "hoi toid" for "high tide."

"Limited in-migration and population growth and the relatively stable co-existence of white and black families make Hyde County an ideal laboratory," Wolfram said. "Listening to older African Americans in Hyde County can tell you what black speech was like; listening to younger African Americans there can tell you where it's going."

Listening to one 87-year-old African American from Hyde County sounds a lot like listening to an older white person from Hyde County, "hoi

toids" and all, Wolfram and Thomas learned. Wolfram said, however, that there are vestiges of African influence present that almost no white people in Hyde County would ever use while speaking; for example, the absence of an "s" attached to a verb after a third-person singular noun, as in the sentence "The dog always bark at noon."

If older African Americans and older whites in Hyde County sound similar, the speech of younger Hyde County African Americans couldn't be more different, Wolfram and Thomas assert. That's because black speech became strongly identified with a sense of black identity in the 20th century, Wolfram said. Simply put, younger blacks don't necessarily want to sound like whites.

"One of the ways African Americans have become increasingly black is by disassociating themselves from local white speech," Wolfram says. "Young African Americans from Hyde County don't sound like Hyde County folks. Instead, they sound more like a national norm of what African-American speech is supposed to sound like."

Wolfram and Thomas believe that one of the major



A new book claims that the speech patterns of a pocket of Southern African Americans is similar to that of whites and is partly derived from British dialect.

ways black speech norms in the 20th century have been transmitted is by interregional contact among African Americans.

"In effect, African-American speech in Hyde County turned away from local, rural norms toward the norms of African-American English found in other settings throughout the United States, particularly urban contexts," the book states. "It is now well established that there is a core set of AAVE structures regardless of

where AAVE is spoken in the United States. This generalized core of features seems to be the norm that younger African-American speakers are turning to as their vernacular model at the same time they are moving away from the Hyde County regional dialect norms."

Current research of an isolated pocket of African Americans in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina also supports Wolfram and Thomas' thesis. African Americans

sound a lot like whites, but use vestiges of African speech that aren't present in white speech, Wolfram said. Moreover, blacks use these same African vestiges in both Hyde County and in the mountains. Wolfram believes these people have not had any contact, so only his new theory would explain their speech similarities.

The book was supported by the National Science Foundation and the William C. Friday Endowment.



A witness to the incident who is a friend of Nakia Glenn describes what happened to local Muslims.

Sheriff

from page A1

mary because a number of Barker supporters joined the race in order to cut the vote and give Barker an easy victory.

Citing their acrimonious past, Barker said that Schatzman's statements concerning the Glenn case are purely political.

"He will do and say anything to get his name before the people," Barker said Tuesday.

To buoy his point, Barker cited a letter he said Schatzman has sent to all of his deputies, a letter detailing ways Schatzman would respond to several issues at the department. In the letter, Barker said, Schatzman vows to end reverse discrimination within the department. Barker believes that to be a veiled criticism of Barker's decision to appoint an African American to head the Forsyth County Detention Center several years ago. Barker says no reverse discrimination exists and that all of his employees have their positions because they work hard and are qualified.

Schatzman said he did send out the letters but only after Sheriff's Department employees wrote him a letter detailing problems at the department. He said his vow to end reverse discrimination was not aimed at any one person and is part of his plan to end racism, of all kinds, within the department.

"Racism is bad any way you see it," he said.

The sheriff said he made the decision to put the deputies back on active duty after launching and completing an investigation of his own. When asked who was interviewed as part of the investigation and other details about his probe, Barker refused to elaborate.

"I came to the conclusion that my people had done nothing wrong," Barker said.

Barker said there was also a need to have the two men back on the streets because budget issues have handicapped him from finding deputies to replace the two on

the streets.

Barker said the deputies had their hands full with Glenn. He said that Glenn was on cocaine at the time, which gave him the strength of "five or six people." Barker also said that Glenn picked up one of the deputies and body slammed him to the ground and reached for the deputies' guns more than one time during the incident.

"(Glenn) is lucky to be alive after trying so very hard to get the officers' guns," Barker said.

But witnesses to the Aug. 19 incident tell a different story. Many who live along the street where Glenn was pulled over watched the scene from their porches. They say Glenn put up little resistance and that the deputies beat him repeatedly with heavy flashlights.

Barker said that a "small" flashlight was used on Glenn by one of the officers but only after Glenn allegedly body slammed a deputy.

Barker said he anticipates that Keith will find that no wrongdoing by the deputies took place.

"If it turns out I am wrong, then they will be terminated, but I am not looking for that to happen," Barker said.

Schatzman said Barker's personal investigation should have taken a backseat to the SBI's findings and the DA's determination. Schatzman added that by jumping the gun and not distancing the department from the investigation, Barker has left himself and the department vulnerable to critics.

"When you do that, you always leave yourself open to criticism," Schatzman said.

Bill Tatum, the president of the local NAACP, said that he believes Keith and Barker have been in communication and that's why the sheriff made the decision to put the deputies back on the streets.

Barker denies that. Regardless, Tatum said the decision shows that blacks still do not get the same level of respect given to other races.

"It shows me that there is a lack of respect for African Americans in incidents of this nature."

one big day. lots of great brands. savings you don't want to miss.

super saturday

stores open saturday at 9am

save 50%

on these and many other items for one day only, saturday, april 6

save 50%
Lee
Men's Lee® twill pants
Reg. 34.00, sale 17.00

save 50%
Wilson
Boys' Wilson® activewear
Shown: 8-18 top or shorts.
Reg. 14.99, sale 7.49 each

save 50%
Juniors' screen tees
Reg. 16.00-20.00, sale 8.00-10.00

save 50%
Supersize bath towel and coordinating bath rug
Towel, 30x54-in. 100% cotton. Reg. 7.99, sale 3.99
Textured border bath rug, 21x34-in. Reg. 19.99, sale 9.99

save 50%
FORECAST
Charleston 2 luggage Choose the 21-in. upright plus tote, #94200, the 25-in. expandable upright, #94201, or the 29-in. upright, #94202. Reg. 59.99 each, sale 29.99 each
Plus Save 50% On All Luggage*

save 50%
Fundamentals™ cotton panties
Reg. 1.99, sale .99

save 50%
41-pc. travel emergency kit #7139
Reg. 19.99, sale 9.99
Available in Auto Center

save 50%
KRUPS
V65 Intelligent iron #48669. Reg. 79.99, sale 39.99
Plus Get This Storage Bag, #48671 (a 20.00 value) FREE With Purchase Of This Iron. Free storage bag offer good while quantities last.

save 50%
All men's pajamas
Reg. 18.00-20.00, sale 9.00-10.00

save 50%
Craftsman 10-pc. screwdriver set
Phillips and slotted, #41881. Reg. 17.99, sale 8.99

save 50%
Craftsman 7-pc. combination wrench set
Standard or metric, #47004/5. Reg. 19.99, sale 9.99

save 50%
ULTRA PLUS™ laundry detergent
275 wash loads in bucket, #9862
Reg. 24.99, sale 12.49

Only Sears has the brands you want with the guarantees, credit and service you need

SEARS

Where else?™

Savings prices in effect Saturday, April 6, 2002. *ALL ON SALE EXCLUSIONS: Exceptional Values, Special Purchases, Clearance, Closeouts, Sears.com, select store purchases, clothing, jewelry, fragrance, bath and body products, Cashmere, J. A. Henckels, Shermans & Penner and Sealy Posturepedic Crown Jewel mattresses, Sears automotive services, Maytag Genie and Neptune, Sears licensed businesses, installed home improvements, and maintenance agreements. EXCEPTIONAL VALUE: We believe the Exceptional Value are the best values in the marketplace every day. Exceptional Values will never be priced lower. Excludes clearance and closeouts. SEARS PRICE MATCHING POLICY: If you find a lower price on an identical branded item currently available for sale at another Sears retail store, Sears will match that price. Just tell your sales associate at the time of, or within 30 days after, your purchase. If you find a lower price including shipping, handling and delivery on an identical branded item currently available for sale and delivery in your area from an established online retailer, Sears will match that price at the time of, or within 30 days after, your purchase. Just print the online page, including shipping, handling and delivery, and bring to your Sears store at the time of, or within 30 days after, your purchase. If you are purchasing online, e-mail the information to online@sears.com. EXCLUSIONS: Sears will not price match competitor's bonus or free offers, special offers, rebates, financing offers, clearance or reduced prices, or prices on used, damaged or display merchandise, service contracts or automotive services, installation, delivery or assembly services. Sears Price Match Policy does not apply to third-party.com. Participating.com. Sears' earned partner websites, Sears.com, and Sears.com do not include shipping. Sears in Puerto Rico, Mexico and Hawaii will not match online prices. SEARS IN-STOCK PROMISE ON ADVERTISED ITEMS: We try to have adequate stock of advertised items. When out-of-stock occur, you may choose an equal or better item at the advertised price, or a substitute for the advertised item. Limited offers, special orders and items not normally available at our Sears store are excluded. Sears is a registered trademark of Sears, Roebuck and Co. ©2002 Sears, Roebuck and Co.