

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Over the past three decades, Professor Wolfram has pioneered research on a broad range of vernacular dialects, including African American English, Puerto Rican English, Appalachian English, Ozark English, Southern English, American Indian English, Vietnamese English, and currently, Outer Banks and Lumbee English. He published in 1969 the first descriptive linguistic book on African American Vernacular English and helped launch the national awareness about the role of vernacular dialects in American society and in education. Committed to the ideal that researchers should actively seek ways to serve the communities they research, he then committed two decades of his teaching career to developing programs for and teaching students at the University of the District of Columbia, a historically Black university in Washington, D.C. At the same time, he expanded the scope of community-based research as the Director of Research at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. Supported through grants from agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institute for Education, the Department of Education, The National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Educational Testing Service, he has conducted research in more dialect communities than any current dialectologist or sociolinguist in North America. He currently is researching the unique variety of English spoken on the Outer Banks of North Carolina as an endangered dialect community, while also conducting a comparative study of the Lumbee Indian, African American, and European American communities in Robeson County, North Carolina.

He has authored or co-authored books profiling the sociolinguistics of diverse communities, such as *A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech* (1969), *Sociolinguistic Aspects of Assimilation: Puerto Rican English in New York City* (1974), *Appalachian Speech* (1976), *Variation and Change in Geographically Isolated Speech Communities: Appalachian and Ozark English* (1988), and *Hoi Toide on the Outer Banks: The Story of the Ocracoke Brogue* (1997), and *Dialect Change and Maintenance on the Outer Banks* (1999). He has also authored or co-authored a number of textbooks, including *The Study of Social Dialects in American English* (1974), the first student text on social dialectology, *Phonological Analysis: Focus on American English* (1981), *Dialects and Education: Issues and Answers* (1989), *Dialects and American English* (1991), *American English: Dialects and Variation* (1998) and *Language Variation in the School and Community* (1999). Over 200 of his articles have been published in professional research and applied research journals. He is active in professional organizations, serving as the President of the American Dialect Society and the Associate Editor of *Language*, and *Language Variation and Change*.

A prominent concern of Professor Wolfram involves the application of basic research findings to social and educational problems, and he has conducted numerous workshops and seminars for school systems and other public and private agencies. He is particularly interested in the effective dissemination of information on language variation to current practitioners and to the American public. This interest has included work on several TV documentaries about dialects in the United States, including the award-winning documentary *American Tongues*, shown on PBS. He has also served as the linguistic consultant for the Children's Television Company, the producers of Sesame Street and the Electric Company.

In 1992, he was named the first William C. Friday Distinguished Professor in the English Department at North Carolina State University, where he focuses his research efforts on the richly varied dialects of North Carolina under the aegis of the North Carolina Language and Life Project. He received research grants from the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct his research on the changing status of Outer Banks English. Since his arrival at North Carolina State University, he has been received the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Distinguished Research Award (1995-96) and the Alumni Association Outstanding Research Award for his research on Outer Banks English. He is currently directing research studies of language on Lumbee English, Cherokee English, and Haliwa-Saponi English as he expands his research base on North Carolina dialects. Under his direction, the program in language variation studies at North Carolina State University has become one of the top research programs on language variation in the United States.