CHARLENE J. SATO DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Dr. Jeffrey Reaser
Departments of English and Linguistics
North Carolina State University

Thursday, February 5, 2015
12-1:15
St. John 11

Language as part of the diversity canon:
How learning about dialects improves students' attitudes about difference

Despite being a crucial social marker of many of these groups, dialect and language variation has remained outside of the diversity canon. Even as sociolinguistic information has begun to permeate teacher education programs, linguistically aware teachers are often stifled by a paucity of materials that teach about language variation. This shortage of information and materials about linguistic diversity is made more critical as teacher and student demographics have never been more dissimilar: the diversity of students has increased while the teaching population has become increasingly homogeneous. In this talk, Dr. Jeffrey Reaser will discuss and share examples of the first state-based dialect awareness program to be developed and implemented in the United States, *Voices of North Carolina: Language and Life from the Atlantic to the Appalachians* (Reaser and Wolfram 2007). The curriculum, designed for middle school students, offers teachers and students an opportunity to investigate regional and social dialects, including Appalachian English, Outer Banks English, African American English, and Lumbee Indian English. It also explores the use of Spanish and the revitalization of Cherokee in the state. In collaboration with a team of professors and teachers, Dr. Reaser has developed and implemented the curriculum in social studies classrooms in order to explore the historical, social, political, and linguistic aspects of language. One noteworthy part of the curriculum is that it is designed to be taught by classroom teachers who lack linguistic training. He will examine data demonstrating the effectiveness of the curriculum for improving students' knowledge and attitudes about language variation as well as the responses of classroom teachers to the materials and information. He will discuss how these data can inform curriculum design and empower more educators to incorporate information about language into their classes. Finally, he will share how these same principles have been used in the creation of the nation's first formal diversity education program focused on language, which has now become a part of the diversity training for all employees of NC State University.

Bio: Jeffrey Reaser is an Associate Professor of English at North Carolina State University where he coordinates the secondary English education program and contributes to the North Carolina Language and Life Project. He served as the lead developer for the *Do You Speak American? Secondary School Curriculum* (2005) and *College-Level Curriculum* (2005) (PBS). His research examines the effectiveness of formal and public education linguistics projects, including the development and testing of the nation's first state-based dialect awareness program, Voices of North Carolina: Language and Life from the Atlantic to the Appalachians (Reaser and Wolfram 2007). In conjunction with the NCLLP and the Ocracoke Preservation Society, he compiled an oral history project entitled Ocracoke Still Speaks: Reflections Past and Present (2011). With Walt Wolfram, he co-authored *Talkin' Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina* (2014), which was nominated for the Linguistics Society of America's Leonard Bloomfield award. He has served on the American Dialect Society, the editorial boards of *American Speech* and *Language* and has chaired the Language in the School Curriculum Committee of the Linguistics Society of America.

Additional events with Dr. Reaser:

Thursday, January 29
Film Screening: *First Language: The Race to Save Cherokee*
Moore 575 (Linguistics Conference Room), 6:30-7:30 PM
A production of the North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP), [this film](#) *documents the extraordinary measures being taken to preserve the Cherokee language, including the establishment of a total-immersion elementary school.*

Tuesday, February 3
Linguistics Tuesday Seminar
Operationalizing linguistic gratuity: Documenting and conserving language in North Carolina
St. John 11, 12-1:15 PM
Dr. Jeffrey Reaser will discuss community engagement strategies that have evolved over nearly two decades of research and extension work by the North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP). His presentation will include vignettes from the NCLLP's most recent documentary film, First Language: The Race to Save Cherokee, *as well as vignettes and lessons learned from previous extension projects.*

Tuesday, February 3
Uniting linguists and teacher educators: Pre-Service English teachers' development of critical language pedagogies
College of Education Collaboration Center (CCC), Wist Hall, 5:00-6:30 PM
In this talk, Dr. Jeffrey Reaser (English-Linguistics, NC State University) examines a 4-week, online "mini-course" for pre-service English Language Arts teachers designed to develop their development of critical perspectives on language for teaching. The mini-course promoted four foundational sociolinguistic principles essential for supporting literacy learning for diverse students: (1) English has various dialects that are equally valid and grammatical, (2) language varies in different contexts and communities in systematic ways, (3) language use reflects identity, and (4) language is often the basis for judgments about people. The course drew from research on Critical Language Pedagogy an approach that guides students to critical examinations of the ideologies surrounding language and dialects, the power relations such ideologies uphold, and ways to change these ideologies.