

"THIS WHOLE LANGUAGE VARIATION JOURNEY":  
EXAMINING TEACHERS' CHANGING BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE  
AND LINGUISTICALLY AWARE PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS

By

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## Abstract

This study examines how professional development conditions, events, and activities relate to the process of teachers becoming linguistically aware. Through an analysis of 18 transcribed individual and group interviews, I show how changes in beliefs about language, as well as the application of these changes to teachers' pedagogies take place among a sample of 14 teachers. I analyze these findings as an outcome of these teachers' professional development and in relation to models of effective professional development derived from the fields of Multicultural Education, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Intercultural Communication, and Sociolinguistics. I also propose a new model, the Process of Linguistic Awareness and Application Model (PLAA Model, Strickling, 2012), that more accurately evaluates how changes take place as the teachers in this study become more linguistically aware. Changes in beliefs about language involve a cycle of five phases: confronting new linguistic information, questioning linguistic information and previously held beliefs, integrating new linguistic information within contexts of social engagement, evaluating the relational, emotional, and cognitive aspects of the experience, and modifying beliefs about language within the specific context of the experience. The PLAA Model also shows how a nuanced secondary cycle can occur where the process of questioning, integrating, and evaluating inform each other in a repeating cycle of increasing linguistic awareness before the final phase of modifying beliefs takes place. The cycle results in experiential linguistic knowledge and becomes the paradigm for new questioning. Within the secondary cycle, the teachers in this study show that they either gain a more linguistically aware knowledge from their experience or within some contexts, reinscribe an aspect of their

previously held standard language beliefs *and* gain a linguistic awareness during the same experience. This contrary movement likely indicates a flux in beliefs about language.