

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2015.017.005](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2015.017.005)

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## **EPISTEMOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION IN ESP CONTEXTS: ANALYSIS BY GENDER AND PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

### **Abstract:**

Research on epistemological beliefs- beliefs about the nature of knowledge, where it resides, and how knowledge is acquired and should be evaluated- has gained momentum over the past few years. Past research reported differences in epistemological beliefs between hard domains of knowledge such as science and math and soft domains such as languages, humanities, and social sciences. In ESP and EAP foreign language contexts, language is used in teaching inherently different domains of knowledge, with all likelihood that students' epistemological beliefs about knowledge in their fields of study interfere with their beliefs about linguistic knowledge, an area that has not heretofore been explored in epistemic literature. The current study aimed at investigating the epistemological beliefs of students from different domains of knowledge studying EFL courses at the tertiary level for any potential belief interference. Moreover, the study investigated differences in students' epistemological beliefs as a function of gender and proficiency level. Study instrumentation, procedures, and findings along with recommendations for language education and further research will be discussed.

### **Keywords:**

Epistemological beliefs, English for specific purposes, language proficiency, gender