

---

**SIMPLE VS SOPHISTICATED EPISTEMIC BELIEFS: AN INITIAL STEP TO DEVELOP SEMINAR ON ELT COURSE MATERIAL*****Ressi M. Delijar****Universitas Brawijaya, Malang*[\*ressimd@ub.ac.id\*](mailto:ressimd@ub.ac.id)***Hamamah****Universitas Brawijaya, Malang****Ive Emaliana****Universitas Brawijaya, Malang*[\*ive@ub.ac.id\*](mailto:ive@ub.ac.id)**ABSTRACT**

The development of appropriate teaching materials not only needs to be adjusted to the latest curriculum but also to the needs of the parties involved in learning. One of the parties involved is the learner. The needs of learners in the learning process must be known to develop appropriate teaching materials. This study is intended to map the needs of learners in the Seminar on ELT class as a first step to develop appropriate teaching materials by considering the different characteristics of students through the perspective of their epistemological beliefs. The participants involved in this study were 102 students who had attended the Seminar on ELT class. The result showed that majority of Seminar on ELT students (95%) are having sophisticated epistemic beliefs which we can describe them as the students that believe the knowledge is always changing or tentative, learning can be done individually by everyone, their knowledge of English did not come from authority, but through reason or logic experiences. They also believe that everyone can learn English from the beginning, no matter what age, or even their background. They agree on process-oriented learning. They also tend to have high motivation to learn English regardless of whether the motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic motivation. With this finding, we can finally understand the characteristics of the Seminar on ELT students as an initial step to develop an appropriate course material.

*Keywords: Epistemic Beliefs, Needs Analysis, Course Material Development, ELT*

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Banegas (2019), authenticated curricula in language teaching are frequently hierarchical and top-down. As the Indonesian ministry of education has released a new curriculum guideline, Higher Education is attempting to organize and establish how teaching and learning processes should be approached by each department. It is widely understood that lecturers are primarily responsible for curriculum implementation, and that their performance is dependent on their understanding and ownership of the curriculum's planned content (Huizinga, et al., 2014). This is also true in the English language teaching (ELT) program, where a new curriculum requires lecturers to examine or even revisit their instructional devices, such as teaching materials. As one of the course, Seminar on ELT course materials must be reviewed considering the changing curriculum to ensure that they are appropriate for the new curriculum, which is based on outcomes (OBE).

To examine course material, we not only need to adjust to the new curriculum, but also adjust to other factors and variables (Hariyati et al, 2019). The needs of the parties involved in learning must also be considered. Activities to collect information that can be used as a basis for developing a teaching material are also called needs analysis (Darici, 2016). Needs Analysis

is one of the important aspects of ELT. We will never be possible to create the appropriate materials that has the desired impact on language learners if we fail to gather the needs of teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Masuhara (1998) classified needs into three types: Learners' Needs, Teachers' Needs, and Administrators' Needs. This study only focuses on the needs of learners. Masuhara (1998) further explains that the needs of learners include aspects of personal needs (age, sex, cultural background, interests, and educational background), aspects of learning needs (such as learning styles, learning experiences, learning goals and expectations) and aspects of future professional needs. (knowledge of language, knowledge of language use, L2 competence). In other words, mapping the needs of learners must consider the diversity of needs from the various aspects and characteristics of the learners mentioned above.

Apart from the impact of individual differences variables such as aptitude, motivation, and learning strategies on English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, one of the students' different characteristics in learning English, epistemic beliefs, becomes one of the unavoidable factors leading to foreign language learning in higher education, particularly for those majoring in ELT. One of the major benefits of taking such personality differences into consideration is that it facilitates a crucial process and helps to achieve the ultimate goal of EFL learning at the university level. Among these several aspects, learners' attitudes toward learning, learning practices, and learning participation, i.e. epistemic beliefs, are critical factors in motivating learners to learn English.

This study is intended to map the needs of learners in the Seminar on ELT class as a first step to develop appropriate teaching materials by considering the different characteristics of students through the perspective of their epistemological beliefs. This research is significant to be carried out as a contribution of information to develop teaching materials that are more relevant to current educational developments.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research focuses on one of the six stages of R&D (Borg and Gall, 2003), namely Need Analysis. As explained earlier, this stage is an important stage in developing materials. This stage is needed to find out the characteristics and needs of the parties involved in learning. In this study, the researcher focused on knowing the characteristics of students through the perspective of their epistemological beliefs. The participants involved in this study were 102 students who had attended the Seminar on ELT class.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instrument used is a 4-scale questionnaire taken from Emaliana (2017) entitled Student Questionnaire on EFL Epistemic Beliefs Blueprint which aims to find out previous students' beliefs on how to view learning English and how to learn English. Emaliana's (2017) questionnaire consists of 39 questions with 2 sub-dimensions, namely: 1) What is knowledge, and 2) How to acquire knowledge. In this study, the questionnaire was adapted by conducting a validity test so that only 19 questions were valid and used in this study. After tried out the questionnaire, it was found that there were 20 items which were not significant, those are; items number 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 34, 35, and 36 as shown in table 3.1 below:

**Table 1. Validity Results of Epistemic Beliefs**

Dimensions	Sub Dimension	Questionnaire	Validity Value	Significant Value	Explanation
1. What is knowledge	<b>1.1 Certain Knowledge</b>  knowledge is static – tentative	Item 1	0.471	0.344	Significant
		Item 2	0.299	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 3	-0.119	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 4	0.364	0.344	Significant
		Item 5	0.219	0.344	Not Significant
2. How to acquire knowledge	<b>2.1 Fix Ability</b>  ability to learning is inherited-to improve over time	Item 6	0.259	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 7	0.388	0.344	Significant
		Item 8	0.645	0.344	Significant
		Item 9	0.340	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 10	0.232	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 11	0.515	0.344	Significant
		Item 12	0.281	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 13	0.418	0.344	Significant
		Item 14	0.136	0.344	Not Significant

		Item 15	0.315	0.344	Not Significant
<b>2.2. Omniscient authority</b> Schraw, et al., 2002): learning comes from authority - learning can be done individually by everyone		Item 16	0.158	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 17	0.439	0.344	Significant
		Item 18	0.580	0.344	Significant
		Item 19	0.011	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 20	-0.057	0.344	Not Significant
	<b>2.3 Simple knowledge</b> learning is handed down by authority - knowledge is acquired through reason or logic experiences		Item 21	0.240	0.344
		Item 22	-0.050	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 23	0.462	0.344	Significant
		Item 24	0.261	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 25	0.143	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 26	0.423	0.344	Significant
<b>2.4 Foreign language aptitude</b>			Item 27	0.402	0.344
		Item 28	0.380	0.344	Significant
		Item 29	0.119	0.344	Not Significant

		Item 30	0.552	0.344	Significant
	<b>2.5 Learning and communication strategies</b>	Item 31	0.357	0.344	Significant
		Item 32	0.578	0.344	Significant
		Item 33	0.456	0.344	Significant
		Item 34	-0.071	0.344	Not Significant
		Item 35	0.083	0.344	Not Significant
		<b>2.6 Motivation and expectation</b>	Item 36	0.340	0.344
	Item 37		0.497	0.344	Significant
	Item 38		0.381	0.344	Significant
	Item 39		0.542	0.344	Significant

From the validity test above, this study then has 19 questions with the following details.

**Table 2. Total Questions in Questionnaire**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Sub-dimensions</b>	<b>Total Questions</b>
1. What is knowledge	<b>1.1 Certain Knowledge</b> knowledge is static - tentative	2
2. How to acquire knowledge	<b>2.1 Fix Ability</b> ability to learning is inherited-to improve over time	4
	<b>2.2. Omniscient authority</b> Schraw, et al., 2002): learning comes from authority - learning can be done individually by everyone	2

	<b>2.3 Simple knowledge</b> learning is handed down by authority - knowledge is acquired through reason or logic experiences	2
	<b>2.5 Foreign language aptitude</b>	3
	<b>2.6 Learning and communication strategies</b>	3
	<b>2.6 Motivation and expectation</b>	3

### Data Collection

Data collection was carried out by distributing online questionnaires using google forms to 102 students who had taken the Seminar on ELT class. The data obtained from the questionnaire in the form of numbers 1-4 according to the selected answer.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher applied two types of data analysis: quantitative and descriptive qualitative. For the questionnaire, the researchers used a quantitative approach. The data from the quantitative analysis was derived as a mean. The tendency of the students' epistemic beliefs was determined by the highest mean of each question. Likewise, the result of the students' questionnaire about their epistemic beliefs are calculated from the total score:

<b>19 – 47</b>	<b>= SIMPLE EPISTEMIC BELIEFS</b>
<b>48 – 76</b>	<b>= SOPHISTICATED EPISTEMIC BELIEFS</b>

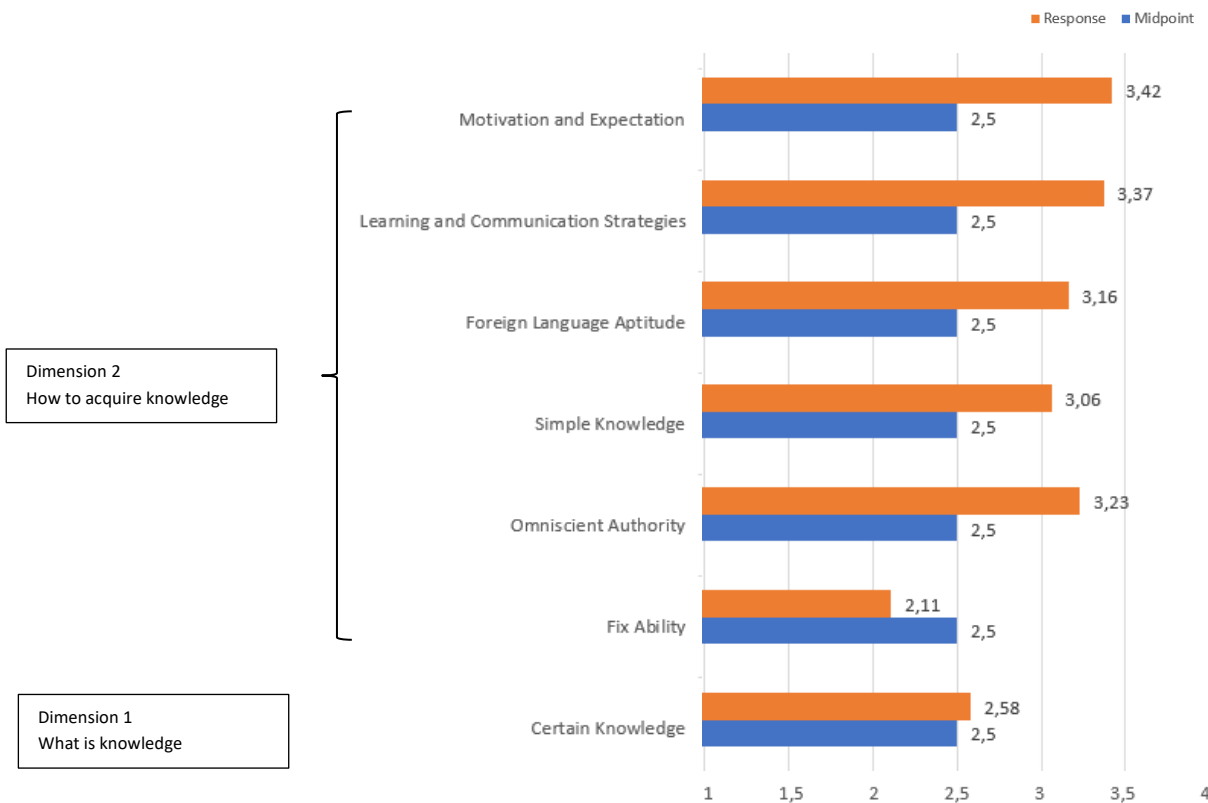
Furthermore, descriptive qualitative was applied to examine the data by carefully arranging the data in the form of a phrase or word, resulting in a broad conclusion about the object. The results of all the data instruments utilized in this research and development describe the methods used to build the final product, which is course materials for Seminar on ELT.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

### EFL Students' Epistemic Belief

To answer the first research question, the data obtained from the 4-scale questionnaire was calculated on an average per dimension to determine the participants' thoughts on the dimensions being tested. Data were taken from 102 students who had joined the seminar class on ELT. Then, the data are classified into two levels of epistemic belief. The two levels of epistemic belief are simple and sophisticated epistemic belief. The chart below shows a comparison between student responses to several dimensions in the epistemic belief questionnaire. The figure below indicates the overall mean scores of the epistemic belief

dimensions were mostly more than the midpoint of the response scale which suggest that the participants have sophisticated beliefs about the sub-dimensions tested.



**Figure 1. Mean Scores of Each Epistemic Belief Dimensions**

### **Dimension 1: What is knowledge**

The mean value of the first dimension of Certain Knowledge ( $M = 2.58$ ), which is slightly higher above the midpoint of the four-point rating scale (2.5), indicates that a number of students in this study tend to agree that knowledge is always changing or tentative. This does not imply that participants view knowledge as fixed and static.

### **Dimension 2: How to Acquire Language**

The lowest average value ( $M=2.11$ ) is the Fix Ability sub-dimension. The average value for this sub-dimension is significantly below the midpoint (2.5) of the four-point rating scale. This indicates that participants tend to disagree that mastering English is something that can be learned with hard work and is something that is inherited. So that participants believe that English learners will be stuck one day even though they have tried their best.

The next sub dimension of second dimension is Omniscient Authority ( $M=3.23$ ). With the mean above the midpoint, it indicates that they agree that learning can be done individually by everyone. Participants tend to disagree about the omniscient authority dimension. It means that they disagree if learning comes from authority.

The average value of the Simple Knowledge sub-dimension (M=3.06) was also higher than the midpoint, indicating that participants tended to agree that their knowledge of English did not come from authority, but through reason or logic experiences.

The Foreign Language Aptitude sub-dimension also has a high average score (M=3.16), although not the highest, but from this average it can be seen that Students believe that everyone can learn English from the beginning, no matter what age, or even their background

The results of the average value of the Learning and Communication Strategies sub-dimension (M=3.37) reflect the perspective of participants who agree on process-oriented learning. They will keep practicing and do not feel shame to make mistakes.

The last sub-dimension of the second dimension is Motivation and Expectation (M=3.42) where the average value is the highest and far beyond the midpoint. Through these results, it can be seen that participants tend to have high motivation to learn English regardless of whether the motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic motivation. They have high hopes that the knowledge they have will be useful for them now or in the future.

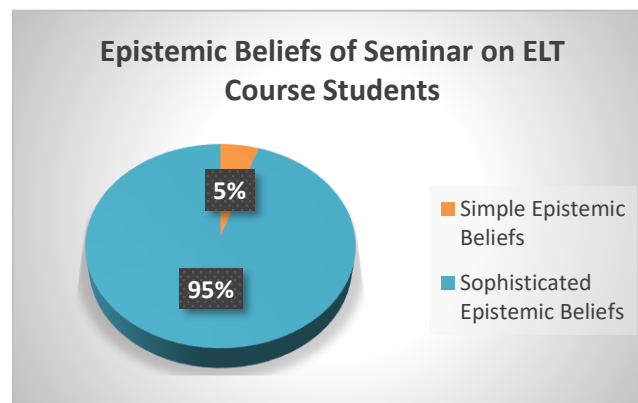
**Table 2. Mean Scores of Each Epistemic Belief Dimensions (in table)**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Sub-Dimensions</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>
Dimension 1 What is Knowledge	Certain Knowledge	102	2.58
	Fix Ability	102	2.11
Dimension 2 How to Acquire Knowledge	Omniscient Authority	102	3.23
	Simple Knowledge	102	3.06
	Foreign Language Aptitude	102	3.16
	Learning and Communication Strategies	102	3.37
	Motivation and Expectation	102	3.42
<b>MEAN</b>			2.95

Finally, the responses to all items in those two dimensions with seven sub dimensions in total, were calculated to obtain the measure of their general epistemic beliefs. As shown in Table 1, the mean score for overall epistemological beliefs (M = 2.95), which is considerably



above the mid-point of the scale, means that the participants, in general, had more sophisticated epistemic beliefs than the simple ones.



**Figure 2. Epistemic Beliefs of Seminar on ELT Course Students**

To support the findings above, the researchers also calculated the mean of every participant. It is found that, 95% of participants (N=97) are having sophisticated epistemic beliefs, while only around 5% of the participants (N=5%) are having the simple epistemic beliefs.

## CONCLUSIONS

From this research we can conclude that majority of Seminar on ELT students are having sophisticated epistemic beliefs which we can describe them as the students that believe the knowledge is always changing or tentative, learning can be done individually by everyone, their knowledge of English did not come from authority, but through reason or logic experiences. They also believe that everyone can learn English from the beginning, no matter what age, or even their background. They agree on process-oriented learning. They also tend to have high motivation to learn English regardless of whether the motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic motivation. But in the other hand they tend to disagree that mastering English is something that can be learned with hard work but something that is inherited. With this finding, we can finally understand the characteristics of the Seminar on ELT students as an initial step to develop an appropriate course material.

## REFERENCES

- Banegas, D.L. (2019): Language curriculum transformation and motivation through action research, *The Curriculum Journal*, DOI: 10.1080/09585176.2019.1646145
- Borg, W. R., & Gall. M., D. 1983. *Educational Research an Introduction*. New York and London: Longman Inc.

- 
- Darici A. (2016) The Importance of Needs Analysis in Materials Development. In: Azarnoosh M., Zeraatpishhe M., Faravani A., Kargozari H.R. (eds) Issues in Materials Development. Critical New Literacies: The Praxis of English Language Teaching and Learning (PELT). Sense Publishers, Rotterdam. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-432-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-432-9_3)
- Emaliana, I. (2017). Correlation between EFL Epistemic Beliefs and English Language Proficiency among Indonesian EFL Students. *Dissertation*. Graduate Program in English Language Teaching, State University of Malang.
- Hariyadi. et al. (2019). The Importance of Needs Analysis in Materials Development, *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan*, 4 (2) : 94 – 99, p-ISSN: 2502-7069; e-ISSN: 2620-8326
- Huizinga, T., Handelzalts, A., Nieveen, N., & Voogt, J. M. (2014). Teacher involvement in curriculum design: Need for support to enhance teachers' design expertise. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 46(1), 33–57. doi:10.1080/00220272.2013.834077
- Masuhara, H. (1998). What do teachers really want from coursebooks? In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (pp. 239–260). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.