

An Investigation of the Relationships between EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Epistemological Beliefs and their Learning Strategies, Teaching Practices and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the relationships between EFL pre-service teachers' epistemological beliefs and their learning strategies, teaching practices and foreign language classroom anxiety. The subjects of the study were 114 EFL pre-service teachers, at Riyadh Teachers' College, KSA. They responded to four tools designed by the researchers: an EFL Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire (EFLEBQ), an EFL Learning Strategies Questionnaire (EFLLSQ), an EFL Teaching Practices Questionnaire (EFLTPO) and a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Findings of the study showed that Saudi Arabian EFL pre-service teachers generally hold naïve epistemological beliefs and that they tend to rely more on lower order cognitive strategies such as memorization and rehearsal than higher order ones such as elaboration and critical thinking. They also tend to adopt traditional teacher-centered practices rather than constructive learner-centered ones and they exhibit high levels of anxiety in both learning and teaching in the EFL classroom. Multivariate and univariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs and ANOVAs) were used for data treatment with beliefs clusters (Naïve vs. Sophisticated) as independent variables and the various dimensions of learning strategies, teaching practices, and foreign language classroom anxiety as dependent variables. Results indicated that there were significant multivariate and univariate effects of epistemological beliefs on EFL preservice teachers' learning strategies, teaching practices and foreign language classroom anxiety. EFL preservice teachers with sophisticated epistemological beliefs were more strategic in handling learning situations through deploying appropriate cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective learning strategies compared to those with naïve beliefs. In EFL teaching situations, they were more likely to adopt constructive learner-centered practices compared to the naïve beliefs holders who showed more likelihood to adopt teacher-centered practices. Moreover, they show more tactfulness and calmness in handling anxiety provoking situations in the EFL classroom. The study presents some recommendations in the light of the results to highlight the effect of epistemological beliefs on EFL pre-

*service teachers' foreign language learning and teaching performance.
The study also suggests some topics for further research.*