

## Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.cognitive/2005-03/0033.html>

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**From:** Lester Zick ([lesterDELzick\\_at\\_worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick_at_worldnet.att.net))

**Date:** 02/28/05

Date: Mon, 28 Feb 2005 19:53:21 GMT

On Mon, 28 Feb 2005 15:59:44 +0000 (UTC), Neil W Rickert  
<[rickert+nn@cs.niu.edu](mailto:rickert+nn@cs.niu.edu)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net) (Lester Zick) writes:  
>><[nowhere@nowhere.net](mailto:nowhere@nowhere.net)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:  
>  
>>>In the context of angles it is. Radian is a unit of angular  
>>>measurement. Pi is just a number. In the context pi radians was meant.  
>  
>>Yeah, Bob, I'm just glad I didn't say pi when I meant pi radians for a  
>>straight angle or you and the peanut gallery would have been laughing  
>>up your sleeves for days. So maybe I should rephrase a previous  
>>question and ask if pi falls on pi? Context is everything, Bob.  
>  
>In a mathematical context, angles are given in the natural form of  
>expression. Adding the superfluous word "radians" is optional, and  
>at the discretion of the writer/speaker.

So is adding "degree angle" to 60 but I've never seen reference to a  
60 although there are references to 30-60-90 triangles where the ratio  
of angles is being described. And, by the way, radians may be the  
preferred measure but they are no more natural than degrees in  
describing arcs because you need the radius as reference whereas  
degrees only requires the circle itself as reference. (I know you're  
going to disagree; so you're welcome to the last word here as far as  
I'm concerned because the whole discussion reminds me of whether  
electric current is positive or negative. At the academy we used  
positive hole flow instead of electron flow for current direction for  
some reason that always escaped me.)

>The use of radians is not a choice of measurement unit. It is the  
>natural unit. The only reason to ever specify is to avoid ambiguity  
>with unnatural units such as degrees.

No. The only reason to specify radians is to avoid confusion between  
diameter and pi as the transcendental ratio between diameter and  
circumference of a circle, two entirely different concepts which need  
clear distinction everytime they're employed and always were in my

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experience. I strongly suspect the ratio pi antedates radians as an angular measure by a couple of millenia at least.

Regards – Lester