

Investigating the Reading Difficulties of Algerian EST Students with Regard to their General English Knowledge

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study which investigates the reading comprehension problems of master students of Physics while reading scientific texts in English as a foreign language. It aimed at testing a hypothesis of a causal relationship between two variables; students' GE knowledge and reading comprehension. The results were obtained from a students' questionnaire and a test. The analysis of the data proved that the students' difficulties are due to their linguistic handicap mainly in grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, it confirms that these students' have a poor level in General English which compounds their reading comprehension difficulties. These results lead us to believe that the teaching/ learning situation of English at the Physics Department, at the University of Constantine 1 should be re-considered. In other words, the results proved that there exists a gap between GE and EST teaching. For that, we suggest to implement reading courses to reinforce the students' General English knowledge and promote their reading comprehension of scientific texts

Keywords: linguistic knowledge, GE/ EST dilemma, reading skill, reading comprehension difficulties.