

Milevica Bojović*

*Faculty of Agronomy in Čačak
University of Kragujevac, Serbia
milevicabojevic@gmail.com*

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN BIOTECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING: READING PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES IN A HIGHER EDUCATION SETTING

Abstract

This paper explores the concepts of disciplinary literacy and content-area literacy as well as disciplinary literacy in English as a foreign language for biotechnology engineering. Literacy practices in English as a foreign language in biotechnology are focused on the reading practices and reading strategies that students and disciplinary experts use. The participants are 94 undergraduate students of biotechnical sciences at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia, and 46 biotechnology engineering experts. The focus of the study is the use of reading strategies in English by these two groups. Based on measures of internal consistency, descriptive statistics and ANOVA, the study demonstrates that the most prominent reading strategies used by biotechnology students and experts involve re-reading for better understanding and for details, using background knowledge, using text features, and finding main ideas. The experts generally use reading strategies more frequently than the students. They are more motivated to read English-medium material than the students; they choose the text for reading on their own, confirm the purpose of reading, and discuss what is read with others significantly more frequently than the students. Reading silently is the only reading strategy where gender differences were found.

Key words

biotechnology engineering, disciplinary literacy, English as a foreign language, reading, strategies.

* Corresponding address: Milevica Bojović, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Agronomy in Čačak, Cara Dušana 34, 32000 Čačak, Serbia.