

Xenoglossophobia and Information Seeking Behavior of African Graduate Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effect of xenoglossophobia on information needs and seeking behavior of African Graduates, using graduate students from Nigeria and Ghana at the University of South Carolina, United States, as a case study. Xenoglossophobia is the abnormal and exaggerated anxiety of speaking a foreign language (Böttger & Költzsch, 2020). Although previous investigations have focused on how the realities of moving to a new city may shape the information needs of transnational newcomers (Kim & Lingel, 2016), there is a dearth of empirical evidence in Library and Information Science literature on how xenoglossophobia affects information needs and seeking behavior. The purposive random sampling was adopted to select 36 graduate students from Nigeria and Ghana to participate in the pilot study. Findings revealed that xenoglossophobia, such as accent-related anxieties affect information needs and everyday life information-seeking behavior of African students, especially in their first year of arrival in the United States. This implies that accent is an important factor in accessing and using information, especially for foreign graduate students who are non-native English speakers. This aligns with the findings of Colón-Aguirre and Alcalá (2021). For African graduate students in the United States to effectively seek and use information for everyday life activities it would be critical for them to speak English clearly and in a manner that it is understood by either a librarian or other information service providers. This study has implications for students, information workers, librarians, and agencies who work directly with new international students.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Information practices; Education and Information professionals; Information services; Socio-cultural perspectives.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Information needs; Information seeking behavior; Communication apprehension; Xenoglossophobia; Africa.

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