

## **The relationship between English proficiency and use of information sources among Israeli undergraduate students**

Eilon levy

Advisors: Dr. Ruth Ash, Dr. Daphna Raban, University of Haifa

For the Israeli undergraduate student, carrying out an academic research assignment entails not only the application of relevant domain knowledge, but also the need to cope with the process of searching, evaluating and handling information sources, a significant portion of which takes place in a foreign language – the lingua franca of the science world, the English language.

This research seeks to study the relationship between Israeli undergraduates' English language proficiency and their information behavior, as manifested in the sources they use while completing an academic research assignment. Based on Zipf's "Principle of Least Effort" theory, the research hypotheses suggest that a student whose English proficiency is low will tend to minimize the required cognitive effort derived from searching and processing information sources, by settling to the use of less or lower quality of information resources.

The research will combine two quantitative research methods – citation analysis and survey. The citation analysis of undergraduate's academic research assignments will provide findings regarding their patterns of information sources use, while the survey will provide measurement of the student's level of English proficiency, as well as other intervening factors.

The research aims to support the establishment of foreign language proficiency as a significant factor of EFL (English as Foreign Language) students' information behavior, and enhance our understanding regarding Language proficiency's effect on students' patterns of information sources use. In addition, the research could further existing knowledge about students' information behavior in the Israeli society. In the practical aspect, the research could benefit libraries staff, academic teachers and IT developers, by providing them with detailed insights regarding a major obstacle in their customers' research process, and allowing them to adjust and provide effective support.