A Refocusing on the Study of the Gatekeepers Among Linguistic Minorities, the Case of Spanish Speakers in the United States: Implications for the Study of Information Behavior

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Abstract

In library and information science (LIS), the concept of gatekeeping warrants further exploration, especially due to the strong influence it can have on information behaviors of American minoritized communities. This work focuses specifically on Spanish speakers living in the U.S. and how gatekeeping manifests in their information behaviors. This study employs conceptual analysis to explore the concept of gatekeeping in the LIS literature focused solely on Spanish speakers. Metoyer-Duran's (1991) taxonomy of gatekeepers in ethnolinguistic communities is the main conceptual framework applied to this research, contextualized by broader aspects and further definitions available in the literature. The relationship between information behaviors and gatekeepers used by Spanish speakers is complicated by language and educational attainment. The studies analyzed indicate that organizations such as local health clinics, houses of worship, Latin American stores, workplaces, and schools are common locations where Spanish speakers go when they need information. However, personal social networks are still the primary way American Spanish speakers obtain information. The use of libraries and the Internet is limited within the American Spanish speakers' infosphere. More research is needed, especially considering that even the term "Spanish speakers" is too broad to represent a U.S. population that may come from more than 18 countries that use Spanish as a first language.

Keywords: access to information; ethnicity; gatekeeping; information barriers; information source

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Introduction

D espite being a motif within the narrative of library and information science (LIS) worldwide, the concept of gatekeeping has not been fully explored in the library and information science (LIS) literature. Gatekeeping still warrants further exploration as a concept, especially due to its strong influence on various groups' information behaviors. It is important to remember that human information behavior refers to activities around information that go beyond seeking books or media and includes aspects such as unintentional information seeking, passive information seeking, and avoiding information (Case, 2007).

The identification of gatekeepers and their possible role in information dissemination, control, and availability, has plenty of areas ripe for exploration and have multiple possible connections

to the study of information behaviors. The gatekeepers' role is particularly meaningful when looking at information behaviors and gatekeeping within societal networks. This topic counts a select body of well-articulated and thorough studies (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Haas, 2015; Navarro et al., 2020) but remains primarily underdeveloped, with the most recent literature focusing on gatekeeping and computer networks (Bandy & Diakopoulos, 2020; Thorson & Wells, 2016).

This work will focus on the specific LIS literature that explores how Spanish speakers living in the U.S. experience various aspects of gatekeeping as the practice manifests in their information behaviors while interacting in their personal social networks. Despite the significant number of Spanish speakers currently living in the U.S., LIS research focusing on this population is still scant. This situation is problematic in many ways, especially since the group is a minoritized and marginalized community that has faced systemic exclusion throughout U.S. history. Indeed, at both the federal and state levels, many policies evidence that this problem has historical roots that span a range of egregious humanitarian violations. For example, humanitarian constrictions ranging from the seizing of Latinx-owned lands by the American government during the 18th and 19th centuries to current-day enforcement of English-only policies and blocking legal entry across borders, cement the view that Spanish speakers are an unwelcomed foreign population, rather than being bona fide American citizens spanning generations (Arana, 2019).

Currently, in the U.S., Spanish speakers face all types of discrimination and marginalization, which have had a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of the members of this community. Generally, there is a significant wealth gap between whites and minoritized groups in the U.S., including whites being more highly educated, having higher incomes, and receiving considerably larger inheritances (Thompson & Suarez, 2015). These factors can be traced back to a history of systemic racism and marginalization, which left Spanish speakers vulnerable in all aspects of day-to-day American life. For example, studies related to education have demonstrated that Spanish-speaking students throughout the U.S. public school system face limited access to college-level courses while tolerating xenophobic labeling by peers and teachers (Stromquist, 2012). These kinds of social harms affect students' self-esteem and reduce their chances of accessing higher education (Stromquist, 2012). In terms of healthcare, studies demonstrate that American Spanish speakers are more likely to be uninsured (Harrell & Carrasquillo, 2003) and face shorter lifespans than their white counterparts (Paz & Massey, 2016). Additionally, Spanish speakers in America experience higher rates of illnesses such as type-2 diabetes (Amirehsani, 2010), drug overdose mortality (Cano & Gelpí-Acosta, 2021), and higher breast cancer mortality (Boone et al., 2014). Even within the LIS field, the Spanish-speaking American population has endured a lack of theoretical and pragmatic consideration.

However, within LIS, a more nuanced study of the various ethnic, racial, and national identities of Spanish speakers as a collective group will not be possible until a broader definition of the community is addressed. Thus, this work focuses on a general definition of the Spanish-speaking community and how that definition is represented in LIS literature. To better understand how information practices impact community identity within the American Spanish-speaking population, the main question guiding this research is: How does personal social network gatekeeping influence the information behaviors of Spanish speakers living in the United States?

Literature Review

The Case of Spanish speakers in the United States

Despite the many challenges faced, Spanish speakers are one of the largest demographic groups in the United States, second only to whites. The U.S. Census Bureau includes this group in their categorization of *Hispanic or Latino,* and—as per the 2020 Census—the population has surpassed the 60 million mark (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). Additionally, the American Spanish-speaking population demonstrated significant growth during the last ten years. In the latest Census report, the Hispanic or Latino population grew by 23%, compared to the rest of the American population, which only presented a 4.3% growth since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Although these numbers are not entirely accurate and may present a bias due to the admitted undercounting of racial and ethnic minorities in the 2020 Census (Wines & Cramer, 2022), it is still a relevant trend demonstrating significant growth even after being undercounted. Despite these significant numbers and steady growth in representation in the U.S. population, studies explicitly related to the information-seeking behaviors of American Spanish speakers in the LIS literature are scarce.

Any consideration of the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. must account for the fact that their significant demographic has been historically accompanied by various movements to control or exclude this population from political and civic representation. As a group, American Spanish speakers are still underrepresented politically. For example, the 2020 U.S. presidential election witnessed a significant increase in voter registration among this group (Gamboa, 2021). Overall, 53.7% of the Latinx population voted, which means that although there was a significant increase among those who registered to vote (18 million), only half of those who could vote did so. Also, voter turnout in presidential elections is not the only issue to consider when evaluating Spanish-speaking Latinx's lack of political representation. In 2018, about 6,700 of all local and federal elected officials in the U.S. were of Latinx background, which accounts for only 1.2% of the total elected officials, according to a report by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) (Náñez, 2020).

In addition to their numerical presence, the American Spanish-speaking population is of particular interest here since they are less likely to learn English than other migrant groups, mainly due to a trend toward living in ethnic enclaves in cities around the United States (Massey, 1995). This linguistic position makes American Spanish speakers more likely to depend on information gatekeepers from various contexts when accessing information.

Despite the limited number of studies in the LIS literature that focus specifically on Spanish speakers, there have been some sporadic efforts to study various aspects of information behavior in this broadly defined community, especially in the last two decades. Any study of Spanish speakers in the U.S. must start with acknowledging the possible limitations some members of this community face when they do not speak English, which is the mainstream language of America. This is especially important when considering access to and use of mainstream social services, including but not limited to education (especially for young children), health care, work, and navigating the migration process. Procuring these services usually entails a series of interactions, which can be complicated by issues of migration status and English language proficiency. For many, the level of social information-seeking and gathering means the need to add intermediaries, also referred to as "gatekeepers."

Gatekeepers in Society

Gatekeepers, when seen from a social perspective, are people "…who control[s] a strategic portion of a channel and through filtering, link people to something 'outside'—whether that channel or thing 'outside' is for information, goods, news or [other] people" (Lu, 2007, p. 108). It is essential to point out that while gatekeepers control access to resources valued by others, they typically do not own those resources (Corra & Willer, 2002). When it comes to information-seeking behaviors, a gatekeeper can be characterized as "…a person who, through filtering, links people in a group to unfamiliar or unknown information resources [they] occupy or master" (Lu, 2007, pp. 108-109).

Personal social networks are essential for information acquisition and lend themselves to the proliferation of gatekeepers. Humans are predetermined to rely on others in their primary social groups to obtain information that might be as basic as developing attitudes and opinions (Lu, 2007). Lu defines the role of primary groups (or the formal and informal groups within which an individual forms their interpersonal networks and through which they perform their daily activities) in information acquisition in terms of accessibility and management of information overload.

Considering these ideas, the most accessible information will be favored; precious few information sources are more accessible than establishing oral communication and building relationships with other members of the primary social group. These individuals provide us with easily accessible and credible information, or more specifically, information that recipients deem as truthful and coming from an expert (Lu, 2007). This is the case uncovered by Agada (1999) in a study of inner-city gatekeepers. Agada found that interpersonal sources of information were preferred among a group of gatekeepers operating in a predominantly African American neighborhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.

According to Lu (2007), providing customized answers is the main contribution of communication that adds value to the information received. This practice helps individuals circumvent the issue of information overload since our primary social groups provide us with information that has been processed, filtered, and digested. In this aspect, a community's social gatekeepers filter information and add value to information gathered, disseminated, and exchanged. In their function as a primary group, gatekeepers provide recipients with information, making knowledge more accessible and customized to people's information needs.

Relationships within primary social groups are complex, and therefore the concept of gatekeeping needs to be divided into various components to analyze the relationship between them. According to Barzilai-Nahon (2008), the main aspect of gatekeeping includes the concepts and functions of gate, gatekeeping and gated. Barzilai-Nahon characterizes gate as an "…entrance to or exit from a network or its sections." While gatekeeping is "…the process of controlling information as it moves through the gate," and the gated refers to "…the entity subjected to gatekeeping" (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008, p. 1496). Although Barzilai-Nahon's definition of the gated has a specific connotation of lack of power, the author points out that the gated are often bound to gatekeeping by their own free will. Therefore, any analysis of gatekeeping needs to consider that, although some relationships among gatekeepers and the gated inherently represent a relative power differential among parties, in some cases, the relationship is one borne out of convenience and not out of necessity.

Savolainen (2020) suggests that the idea of expert power mediates the relationship between the gatekeeper and the gated. The gatekeeper possesses or is believed to possess superior knowledge and skills that influence the way they control, facilitate, or filter access to information that they disseminate to the gated. This characterization is notable since it focuses on French and Raven's (1959) typology of power, in which expert power is defined as that which derives from an individual's skills or expertise (Savolainen, 2020).

This focus can be contrasted with Metoyer-Duran's (1991) taxonomy of gatekeepers in ethnolinguistic communities. In this taxonomy, gatekeepers are specifically defined as those who help individuals gain access to the sources they need to solve problems and serve as information providers who move between cultures when linking people with these solutions (Metoyer-Duran, 1991). This taxonomy stems from the creation of a three-axis model.

Metoyer-Duran (1991) produced specific gatekeeper profiles based on various categories or cognitive domains in their work. Some of the most salient profiles that emerged from Metoyer-Duran's work include the impeder and the broker. The impeder profile includes characteristics such as those with access to information sources who can selectively provide information to those who need it to influence decision-making at the individual and community level. Impeders tend to insulate the gated from the larger society.

The broker is defined as "facilitators who function in two cultures" (Metoyer-Duran, 1991, p. 335). Their role is more of a connector to information and does not necessarily add value to the information they provide, even if they often interpret the information for the gated. An aspect that is of particular interest to this study is that in cases where the brokers are members of an ethnolinguistic community, they are often bilingual. A common example in the LIS literature is Chu's (1999) study of immigrant child mediators or those children who serve as interpreters to their foreign-born parents who do not speak the language of their host country.

Furthermore, some gatekeepers who can be classified as brokers have positions of status, which legitimizes their roles as gatekeepers. For example, professionals such as teachers and office workers (Metoyer-Duran, 1991) can be considered culturally certified gatekeepers because they reach their status as a by-product of cultural norms rather than by wielding power that stems from a more traditional locus such as expert power (Lu, 2007; Savolainen, 2020). It can be inferred that an individual with a certain profession, mastery of the dominant language, or access to a certain societal network will be perceived as "in the know" by those who do not share these characteristics. This kind of assumptive perception enables their role as a gatekeeper.

Method

This study employs conceptual analysis to examine the various aspects of the gatekeeper phenomenon and how it manifests among Spanish speakers living in the U.S. The work is specifically focused on this population since the literature available is limited. The issues identified in the literature have great transferability to other cultural groups, including other linguistic minorities in different geographical contexts, minoritized communities, and immigrant groups.

The works included are peer-reviewed empirical studies and were located through searches on proprietary databases such as Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Library Literature & Information Science Full Text, as well as Google Scholar. The researcher employed various

terms to describe Spanish speakers, including "Latin Americans," "Immigrants," "Latinas," "Latinx," and "Hispanics." The main criterion for inclusion is that the work must focus mainly on Spanish speakers, despite specific categorization or national origin. Another important criterion for inclusion in this study is that the focus of the work must be exclusively on Spanish speakers living in the United States. Works that include samples from outside of the United States are not included in this analysis due to the potential to include sociopolitical variants stemming from the country's history and policies regarding their immigration systems. Similarly, works that focus on college students are not included here since this body of work carries an implication of transientness of this population in that they will be expected to return to their countries of origin once their studies are finalized.

For this purpose, the works include sample populations or focus populations described as, among other terms, "Central Americans", "Hispanic", or "Latinx". Meanwhile, works using broader terms such as "immigrants," "lower-income," "minority," and "minoritized," but without categorization of which language they speak, which ethnic group they belong to, or a broader geographic dispersion of the countries of origin which moves it beyond Spanish-speaking nations in Latin America, are excluded. This delineation is necessary since the works using broader classifications for their participants include a wide variety of minoritized groups and did not consider linguistic aspects in their research, which are of central importance. These criteria uncovered a very limited body of work of about seven articles published throughout the last 16 years. The main conceptual framework applied to the works identified was Metoyer-Duran's (1991) taxonomy of gatekeepers in ethnolinguistic communities.

Results

The Locus of Information Exchange and the Sources of Information

The works that addressed American Spanish speakers' information behaviors did not focus on specific national origins but on the common Latinx or Hispanic identity among the participants. One specific piece focused on a migrant worker's identity (Fisher et al., 2004). These works also tended to focus on the general identification of information behaviors, apart from a specific work that focuses on information-seeking behavior and another on using information and communication technologies (ICTs). Most of the works were also contained to studying Spanish speakers in a geographic context, including a region, a state and even a specific city. The main findings for most of the studies were presented in terms of where information is located and who are the sources of information, as well as possible barriers to information acquisition; these are summarized here.

Colón-Aguirre and Ceja Alcalá (2022) explain that low literacy and the ability to speak standard English are factors of consideration when exploring the lived experiences of Spanish speakers in the United States. Their study of information behaviors of Latinas living in Boston, for example, uncovered that the participants perceived the inability to communicate in English significantly influenced their day-to-day information behaviors. Some participants even pointed out the economic constraints brought on by their inability to communicate in standard English.

Participants in the same study depended heavily on their personal social information networks, including several community-based institutions. In terms of relationship-building as part of their information network, participants identified family members and other Spanish speakers,

especially neighbors: these relationships were further defined by their familiarity status, being from the same country of origin (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022).

Beyond their social circle, the women interviewed in this research indicated that a local health clinic was their main source of information and social connection for becoming aware of various services offered by different agencies and groups. The study contrasts that connection function with the isolation and general unhelpfulness of the local school system (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022). The authors also explicitly mention how the participants in their study, although heavily dependent on gatekeepers due to their lack of proficiency with standard English, still managed to have most of their day-to-day information needs to be satisfied in Spanish.

The essential function of the Spanish language as a significant influence on the information behaviors of research participants is a common thread in the literature focusing on Spanish speakers. Adkins and Moulaison Sandy (2018) also point out that the role of language in engaging non-English speaking immigrant populations with institutions is essential, especially in developing trust and providing relevant services. The authors highlight the role of gatekeepers for this community as one that goes beyond the communication of information, including expanding social networks that have the potential to maximize social capital (Adkins & Moulaison Sandy, 2018).

In a study focused on Latinx living in the mid-west region of the United States, Adkins et al. (2017) found that the primary information sources among this community included university extension departments, houses of worship, women's groups, Latin-American stores, schools, Spanish-language media (both television and the Internet), libraries, and workplaces. The role of institutions such as university extension departments and workplaces is of particular interest in this study. In rural areas, the authors note that university extension departments offer immigrants information on topics relevant to their lives in their new setting, including child and adolescent development, community building, physical and mental health, and business development.

Workplaces are also essential since it is where the authors uncovered significant information exchanges taking place. This workplace information exchange focused on work-related safety and requirements, potential health hazards of certain chemicals, home remedies for muscle aches and injuries, the availability of other jobs, and the conditions in other cities or workplaces (Adkins et al., 2017). Other organizations mentioned by the authors, like houses of worship and schools, were locations where information was conveyed to non-English speakers regarding basic living accommodations and available resources. These loci go beyond the traditional ideas of spiritual expression and educational attainment assigned to these organizations. All these organizations were used more commonly than public libraries, which are the institutions that aim to provide and connect people to information.

An earlier study by Fisher et al. (2004) focused on the information grounds of Hispanic workers in the Yakima Valley region located in the Northwest of the continental United States. The study indicates that the primary sources of information this population consulted in their everyday lives were their personal networks, which were indicated by 71% of those studied. At the same time, the Internet was a far second, being cited by 14% of the study's sample, while only 1% indicated an organization such as the library (Fisher et al., 2004). The most cited reasons for using their chosen information source were reliability, ease of access, familiarity, and ease of use or communication. Both Adkins et al. (2017) and Fisher et al. (2004) pointed out how

participants mainly mentioned churches, schools, and workplaces as locations where information was sought or exchanged.

Adkins and Moulaison Sandy (2020) further point out how the ties among the Spanish-speaking immigrant community were typically place-based. Their research found that the local Latin-American grocery store provided a meeting place and a network of users that enabled information exchanges. This was also the case in local Catholic and Protestant places of worship through Spanish-speaking services and social gatherings. Whereas these relationships were direct and focused on a specific meeting place, the participants' ties with English-speaking host communities were often more formal (Adkins & Moulaison Sandy, 2020).

In a study of health information-seeking behaviors among Spanish speakers in the state of North Carolina, Yoo-Lee et al. (2016) found that doctors (65%) were the most cited health information source, followed by friends and family (61.5 %), the Internet (34.6 %), church or community organizations (26.9 %) and T.V. (23.1 %). Here too, the primary information sources were dominated by social networks. The sample in this study represented a population of Spanish speakers with higher educational attainment than those presented by other studies and a more focused type of information behavior, specifically related to health information seeking. However, this group also favored social interactions within a social network when it came to identifying information, this time in the form of an expert (e.g., doctors) and the primary social group members (e.g., friends/family).

The low representation of organizations that specialize in information, as is the case of libraries, among Spanish speakers is a common theme in most research published about this specific population (Fisher et al., 2004; Adkins et al., 2017; Yoo-Lee et al., 2016; Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022). Even general population studies have demonstrated that Spanish speakers, especially those born outside the continental United States, are less likely to use library services. However, they seem to value the services provided by these organizations (Brown & López, 2015).

Connections and Gatekeeping Relationships

The relationship between information behaviors and information use is a complex one. In the case of Spanish speakers in the US., there are further complications due to the roles language and educational attainment play in accessing information, the availability of information sources, and the expertise of those consulted (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2019). For example, a study of information behaviors focused on health topics among Spanish speakers found that online health information-seeking behaviors directly correlated with educational level, with those seeking health information online having a higher level of education (Lee et al., 2014).

An important consideration in most gatekeeping studies among American Spanish speakers includes where information is sought, not just who provides the information. The studies analyzed herein indicate that local organizations such as health clinics (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022), houses of worship, Latin American stores, workplaces (Fisher et al., 2014; Atkins et al., 2017), and schools (Atkins et al., 2017), are common locations where American Spanish speakers go when they need information. This information web is a testament to this population's heavy reliance on personal networks rather than electronic resources when locating information. The intensity of the reliance on retrieving information from local resources seems related to educational level (Lee et al., 2014).

The role of the Internet on information behaviors among Spanish speakers in the U.S. is also limited or not yet developed in the existing literature. Still, it is not the only resource not mentioned by American Spanish speakers, even though it is widely mentioned by other demographic groups in the general population (Horrigan, 2015). The same issue is noted in the literature about the use of libraries. Not using the library but relying on others, either experts such as doctors (Yoo-Lee et al., 2016), non-experts like family members (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022), or organizations like university extension departments (Atkins et al., 2017) and houses of worship (Fisher et al., 2004; Atkins et al., 2017), as well as the limited mentions of sources such as mass media (especially T.V. and radio), might be a sign that the American Spanish-speaking population trusts the information their gatekeepers provide them, or that they value convenience over the accuracy of information. Furthermore, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among Spanish speakers was mainly relegated to establishing communication with others rather than as a way to consult sources using the Internet, as pointed out by Adkins and Moulaison Sandy (2020).

In addition to the locations where information is sought, the published literature seems to provide clear indications of both information impeders and information brokers, as Metoyer-Duran (1991) described. In this aspect, family members and neighbors who are also Spanish speakers and mostly come from the same country of origin are trusted sources of information that put the participants in touch with agencies that can aid in their settling in their new host country (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022). Colón-Aguirre and Ceja Alcalá's research also reveals that Spanish speakers' information-seeking behaviors involve them having some knowledge of and trust in information brokers since the organizations where information is sought are also organizations where individuals who possess a trusted social status and high cultural capital are employed. That is the case with schools and health clinics.

The studies hinted at information impeders as well. In this case, institutions such as local school systems did not consider the needs of families when assigning children to specific schools (Colón-Aguirre & Ceja Alcalá, 2022). This type of information gatekeeping is not broadly studied in LIS literature. Most of the studies available focus on identifying information needs and sources of information.

Conclusion

Analysis of the published literature indicates that gatekeepers are common and play a significant role in the information behaviors of Spanish speakers living in the U.S. This role is made more prevalent by the population's language limitations and by factors such as lower academic achievement, which characterized most of the samples of the published studies. Barzilai-Nahon (2008) pointed out that the literature also indicates many cases in which the relationship between gatekeeping and the gated was borne out of convenience and not exclusively out of need. Preferences such as talking to experts (e.g., doctors), and family members or neighbors, were represented in the literature. However, there is also evidence that the relationship with gatekeepers is born from a need to make day-to-day existence possible in their host country for some Spanish speakers. In these aspects, it can be surmised that the evidence in the literature regarding the influence of gatekeepers on the information behaviors of Spanish speakers in the U.S. is inconclusive. Thus, more studies need to be conducted to clarify and expand on this phenomenon.

Limitations and Future Research

This study, as with any research endeavor, encountered some limitations. The most prevalent issue was the low number of publications addressing the specific population identified. Future research must address this gap to include the large Spanish-speaking American population while recognizing the diversity of this group within the current LIS discourse. Case in point, most LIS studies identify participants as "Latinx," "Hispanics," or "Latin-Americans" when referring to American Spanish speakers. Even though such specificity considers the fact that the use of the term "Spanish speakers" is a more specific term, this still does not recognize that Spanish is the official language of at least 18 countries worldwide, most of which are located in the Americas (Posner & Sala, n.d.). Each of these countries has a distinctive history and culture and its own relationship with the U.S. Historical and cultural factors such as migration status, familiarity with the English language, and the availability of social networks may impact and even trigger when and how migration to the U.S. takes place. Therefore, future studies of Spanish speakers living in the U.S. need to consider the national origins of the participants as a critical, influential factor.

The way in which the American Spanish-speaking population is defined is not the only factor that future studies must consider. In general, the topic needs to be refocused and broadened in terms of considerations regarding the differences between first-generation and second-generation migrants, non-citizens versus citizens, as well as socioeconomic indicators such as educational attainment, profession, and English-language proficiency. These aspects seem to play a role in how Spanish speakers relate to information, which information sources they consult, their specific information needs, and how those are addressed. Nevertheless, the far-ranging infosphere of the American Spanish-speaking population has received very little consideration in the available LIS literature. The only research piece identified in this work that considered the various socio-cultural information-based factors of the American Spanish-speaking population was Colón-Aguirre and Ceja Alcalá's (2020) creation of personal profiles of Latinx living in Boston. The article is of limited relevance and application to this work due to its strong leaning towards practical applications. Still, Colón-Aguirre and Ceja Alcalá's research is a contribution that may provide useful information for LIS practitioners who consider working with Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S.

Unlike the work of Metoyer-Duran (1991; 1993), most of the work identifying potential gatekeepers among various minoritized communities has focused on the agencies which serve these groups rather than on the community members themselves, who might be characterized as gatekeepers by virtue of placing their attitudes and positions in various typologies, including that by Metoyer-Duran (1991). Explorations of this type, which investigate specific members of a community to identify them as potential gatekeepers and the type of gatekeeping they enact upon others, are needed to advance understanding of not only the role of the gatekeepers in passing accurate and needed information to those who seek it but also in identifying potential origins of misinformation and disinformation. The topic of gatekeepers in Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. still has the opportunity for further development. It should be advanced mainly due to its broader applications and the potential for great transferability, especially when considering that many countries around the world have significant populations who do not speak the mainstream language of their host nation. This is especially the case for migrants and refugees but extends to local linguistic minorities as well.

This research demonstrates the insufficiency of existing literature in advancing our understanding of information behaviors, environments, and dynamics around information-based events experienced by Spanish speakers living in the U.S. Developing more work in this area is an

essential parting point if the goal is to create services and programs which responds to the need of this significant minority in the country. As presented here, the number of Spanish-speaking Latinx in the U.S. is significant. Still, the population also faces major challenges in attaining various markers of a high quality of life in the country. In this aspect, many Spanish speakers face multiple challenges on the education, health, and financial fronts. Many of these issues are information-related, especially regarding access and available sources of information.

Any interventions or initiatives that the LIS field can provide specifically directed at Spanish speakers, and any linguistic minority in the country for that matter, must be rooted in a genuine acknowledgement of the systemic challenges faced by these individuals. This enhanced level of consideration necessitates a more nuanced exploration based on the role of gatekeepers among various groups of Spanish speakers, including a more granular approach to research participants' backgrounds and the way in which they identify in terms of various national origins, their migration status, socioeconomic status, and racial identity. In addition, future works need to explore the differences between gatekeepers as individuals and when institutions serve as gatekeepers. As indicated in this work, these differences have not been addressed yet in the literature in the field.

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