Differences in Perceptions of News and Source Credibility Based on Reporter Accent: An Elaboration Likelihood Model Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the news credibility and source credibility based on reporter's accent from an ELM perspective. The hypotheses proposed that the perceived source and story credibility for stories presented in U.S. accent will be higher than that of stories presented in Chinese accent. Also, perceived source and story credibility of Chinese accented reporter presenting a story about China will be higher than the perceived source and story of the same reporter presenting as story about U.S. events. To test the assumption, 109 undergraduate students from Journalism Program in Ohio University were recruited to participate in the 2X2 matched-guise experiment. The results suggested that there were no significant differences in story and source credibility based on reporter accent and the location of the story.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and my grandparents.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The accents of the foreign correspondents have been an obvious detriment to their career. Lev-ari and Keysar (2010) found that a foreign accent undermines a person's credibility in ways that the speaker and the listeners do not consciously realize. They argued that accent might reduce the credibility of non-native job seekers, eyewitnesses, reporters or people taking calls in foreign call centers.

The relationship between one's accent and his perceived credibility is studied by many language attitudes researchers to discover the reactions to foreign accented speech. For example, some such studies that have analyzed the reactions to foreign accents include studies analyzing evaluations of Malaysian accented speech (Gill, 1994), Japanese accented speech (Cargile & Giles, 1998), and Chinese accented speech (Cargile, 1997).

Gill's study (1994) used four different speakers for three kinds of accent: North-American accent, British accent and Malaysian accent to record lecture messages. Participants (all of them were standard North American English accented speaking) were asked to credit these lectures after listening to the recordings. The results show that Malaysian accent was rated the least favorable by the participants, while British was more favorable than Malaysian but less favorable than North American accent.

Cargile and Giles' Japanese accented speech study (1998) is a 4X2 factorial design with manipulation of the speaker's accent, fluency and message content. The speaker's accents were manipulated by making one Japanese speaker record the same messages with four target accents (standard American vs. moderate Japanese vs. heavy Japanese vs. heavy/ disfluent Japanese). The result shows that the standard English

speaking participant rated the Japanese speaker as less attractive than the American speaker.

In Cargile's Chinese accented speech study (1997), the speaker recorded a fictional employment interview with both American-accented English and Chinese-accented English. The research result from both Anglo and Asian participants shows that Chinese-accented speaker was less attractive than the American-accented speaker after the participants listened to the recordings.

Although language attitudes research has investigated a variety of accents and language, all of these studies demonstrated biased evaluation of non-standard language speakers: speakers of non-standard language received negative evaluations.

However, this biased evaluation may not be observed in all cases involving foreign accents. Some foreign accents can be favorable in certain situations. When the stereotype of the race associated with the accent is positive, people tend to trust the speaker more. For example, many people in United States (U.S.) may perceive someone with a British accent to be well-educated and smart. Findings from Edwards' (1977) study about students' reaction to Irish regional accent demonstrate this favorable bias.

Still, many of the studies that demonstrate the favorable traits of nonstandard accents are associated with groups with overall positive stereotypes. But what if a group does not have enough positive stereotypes? Is there any chance for non-standard accented reporters from less popular cultures to demonstrate favorable traits? The researcher assumes that in some journalism cases, an accent from a less popular culture can demonstrate favorable traits. The researcher proposes that when the reporter's accent

indicates he is from the same place where the news happened, this may enhance the perceived evaluation of reporter expertise and may contribute to increased overall evaluations of source and news credibility.

In the U.S., the U.S. accent is considered the mainstream accent, which most audiences will trust. Therefore, the primary objective of this experimental study is to compare if radio news stories presented by a news reporter with Chinese accent will be evaluated differently from the same stories presented by a reporter with U.S. accent. Another objective is to explore if a story presented by a reporter with a Chinese accent will be evaluated more positively when he is covering a story about China, than when reporter accent and news location do not match.

The Chinese accent was chosen because though China has a large group of Chinese correspondents in the U.S., the negative perceptions of China in U.S. media and among people in U.S. may contribute to evaluation biases against Chinese accent. According to Freedom House (2014), an American independent watchdog organization which analyzes the degree of press freedom globally, China was recognized as a "not free" country. The party-oriented Chinese press also goes against the basic foundation of journalism in the Western world. According to the 2010 national survey of American public opinion, nearly two thirds of Americans think that China plays unfair trade; Two thirds now know that China loans more money to U.S. than U.S. loan to China and nearly half consider U.S interests in the next ten years will be critically threatened by a debt to China (2010).

The experiment will use Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) as the theoretical foundation. ELM allows the researchers to see the influences of accent and location alone on audience, excluding other possibilities. This theory suggests two routes of information processing: one is through central route, where people process the information and evaluate the information based on its credibility; another one is through peripheral route where people depend on heuristic cues to evaluate messages (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). The present experiment is founded on the assumption that in the absence of detailed information about reporters, processing through peripheral route may dominate with reporter accent as an important peripheral cue.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To study audiences' perception on news credibility and reporter credibility based on reporter's accent, it is first necessary to identify the criteria for news evaluation and source evaluation, and second to study the roles that accent plays in situations. This part conduct a review to identify the factors that influence news credibility evaluation, and factors for source credibility evaluation, and finally, discusses the role that accent plays in different studies.

2.1: News Quality

News is the lens through which citizens perceive the world and a tool that informs them about the state of the world beyond their immediate experience. News is not only rooted in citizens' lives but also helps them achieve self-governence (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). As citizens understand better about the importance of news, the need for news with good quality gets stronger. Merrill (1968) conducted an early attempt to examine newspaper quality. His quality indicators included factors such as independence, financial stability, integrity, social concern, good writing/ editing, strong opinion, interpretive analysis, staff professionalism and intelligence, power to influence opinion leaders, expansion of readers' education and intellect, and awareness of the world along with focus on politics, international relations, economics, social welfare, culture, education and science.

Another study by Bogart (1989) examined the elements contributing to journalistic quality. This study revealed the top-ranked subjective attributes. They were: accuracy, impartiality in reporting and investigative enterprise. The top-ranked objective

criteria were: 1) High ratio of staff-written copy to wire service and feature service copy; 2) Total amount of non-advertising content; 3) High ratio of news interpretation and backgrounders to spot news reports.

According to Go, Jung and Wu (2014), the perception of news quality can be evaluated through four dimensions: perceived credibility, perceived liking, perceived quality, and perceived representativeness. More specifically, perceived credibility of the news can be judged on its believability, accuracy, bias degree, and objectivity and fairness. The perceived liking can be measured by evaluating how boring, lively, enjoyable, interesting, and pleasing the news content is. Perceived quality is evaluated by how clear, coherent, comprehensive, concise, and well-written the news content is. Finally, perceived representativeness was measured by how important, informative, relevant and timely the news is.

Burgoon and Atkin (1982) discovered that in evaluating news stories, journalists' top-ranked criteria were: accuracy, depth, impartiality, investigative enterprise, literary style, and sophistication of treatment. Kim and Meyer (2005) discovered that editor's ranking of criteria produced five types of quality: ease of use, localism, editorial vigor, news quantity and interpretation. Gladney, Shapiro and Castaldo (2007) identified 38 criteria for web news quality rated by editors of online news sites. The top criteria were credibility, utility, immediacy, content relevance, ease of use, fact-opinion separation, clear paths, simplicity, exclusivity, hyper local, good writing and content.

Although the conceptualizations of news quality presented above generally focus on news content, many factors such as staff professionalism and intelligence (Merrill,

1968), high ratio of staff written copy and total amount of non –advertising content (Bogart, 1977), perceived liking (Go, Jung & Wu, 2014), investigative enterprise, and literary style (Atkin, 1982) suggest that the evaluation of the quality of the source plays an important role in overall evaluation of news. This becomes more salient in case of news on television and radio where the presence of the source is more salient and audience can see and/or hear the presenter of the news. The following section presents conceptualization of source credibility and discusses factors that may influence evaluation of sources.

2.2: Source and Source Credibility

A message cannot be effectively evaluated by audiences if the information about the source is not provided. According to Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield (1953), a source can affect the change in audiences' attitudes toward content in a variety of ways. The impact of a message depends on the particular publication or channel through which it is transmitted (Hovland, Lumsdaine, &Sheffield, 1949). Therefore, in the news reporting, readers' understanding of a piece of news is highly influenced by the media and the reporters that reported it. This argument was supported by Meyer's (1988) study that compared elements that influence people's evaluation on a newspaper's quality. In this study, the trustworthiness of the newspaper is rated higher than other elements such as the accuracy, objectivity, and the factuality of the story.

In addition, through social experience, people may develop expectations about the validity of various sources of information and learn to follow opinion and information that they may perceive as more rewarding. Hovland. et. al's study (1949) on audiences'

opinion change demonstrated that the very same presentation of the message tended to be judged more favorably when it was made by a communicator of high credibility than by one of low credibility. Therefore, when people evaluate news quality, it is possible that depending on different knowledge audiences have towards different channels, audiences might judge the same story from different channels differently.

The study from Go, Jung and Wu (2014) demonstrated the correlation between perceived source credibility and perceived credibility of news content. Focusing on online news content, this study revealed that a news story provided by an expert source was considered to be of higher quality. Additionally, news content from a high expertise source that was recommended by more people was considered more credible. Finally, Edelstein and Ito (1989) have found that respondents may evaluate the media in terms of channel characteristics more often than in terms of dictionary or scholarly definitions of "credibility."

Hence, a source is an important part of the perceived news credibility and news quality, and it is an indispensable part that people have to take into account when they evaluate the credibility of news. With the absence of the source information, it may be difficult to justify the truthfulness of a news story; and with clear source information, one might favor one more than the other depending on their knowledge about the source. Therefore, the credibility of the source, or the perceived credibility of the source is a key element in evaluating news quality.

In mass communication, source credibility is the amount of credibility (believability) attributed to a source of information (Bracken, 2006). According to

Metzger et al. (2003), media credibility refers to the believability, fairness, trustworthiness, credibility and reliability of the institution. The study by Bucy, D'Angelo and Bauer (2014) evaluated the credibility of a press on three dimensions: its attitudes towards press freedom, its social responsibility and its support for press regulation. The questions to evaluate attitudes towards press freedom asked how much latitude the press should have in reporting the news. The questions about social responsibility asked how grateful the institution's journalists are for the work they do, how much the institution tries to serve a public interest and how much the institution understands the challenge facing ordinary people. According to Slater and Rouner (1996), the audiences' prior knowledge and impressions concerning the source may affect their judgment to the source. When audiences have little or no prior familiarity with a source, for example, in news stories, audience members must assess a speaker's credibility from the source's credentials (Slater and Rouner, 1996). When they read news stories, audiences have to refer to other cues to assess the credibility of the speaker if the information of the source credentials is not provided. Therefore, if the audiences do not have access to comprehensive information about sources such as reporters or news organizations, they have to rely on other cues to assess the news quality.

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) found that expertise and truthfulness are two main factors that influence perceived source credibility. Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969-1970), developed Hovland, Janis and Kelley's research which sought out three main criteria which audiences used to evaluate message sources. The three factors are: safety (e.g., safe-unsafe, just-unjust, kind-cruel, friendly-unfriendly, honest-dishonest),

qualification (e.g., trained, experienced, informed, and qualified), and dynamism (e.g., aggressive-meek, emphatic-hesitant; bold-timid; active-passive and energetic and tired). The study by Whitehead Jr (2003) also reported honesty and justice to be the two main aspects of trustworthiness. The study also showed that perceptions about depth of experience and evaluation of professional manners to be the main contributors to perceived professionalism. In the case of dynamism, the aggressive-meek and active-passive aspects were two main components which complied with the former study.

The previous discussion presents several common criteria to evaluate source credibility. Among other factors, factors related to the personality of the source may influence audiences' evaluation on these criteria. For example, factors related to a TV newsreader's appearance and presentation may contribute not only to the credibility of the newsreader, but also to the credibility of the news being read by him. The following section discusses source factors that may influence audiences' impressions of source credibility.

2.3: Factors that Influence Perceived Source Credibility

The review presented in previous sections suggests that many factors would influence the evaluation of news sources. These factors involve the quality of the source per se, but also include different criteria people use to evaluate the news content. Different characteristics of different sources result in different evaluation outcome; using different criteria of evaluation may also result in different judgments.

The study by Burgoon (1978) demonstrated that the voice of the speaker could also affect the perceived credibility of the source. This study showed that the influential

vocal qualities were associated with at least two dimensions: the aesthetic or pleasantness dimension, and an intensity dimension. Most importantly, a greater pleasantness produced a higher rating in the credibility evaluation. The more fluent, pleasant, clearer and slower the speaker, the more competent and composed he was considered by the participants. Also, higher perceived pleasantness was associated with higher ratings on character and sociability.

Ohanian (1990) constructed and validated a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise. His study showed that the three dimensions affecting the celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility were attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. For the attractiveness dimension, the source was evaluated on whether he/she is attractive, classy, handsome/beautiful, elegant, and sexy. For trustworthiness, the source was evaluated on whether he/she is dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy. For the expertise dimension, the source was evaluated on whether he/she is an expert, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, and skilled. Silvera and Austad's study (2004) added that the belief that the endorser truly likes the object of in the advertisement resulted in a more favorable attitude towards the endorsement from the audience. According to Reinhard, Messner and Sporer (2006), the persuasiveness of a source can also be strongly enhanced if he/she has good physical appearance. Their study showed that the physical attractiveness determines the impact of an explicit persuasion attempt. Findings showed that attractive salespersons with an explicit intent to influence can stimulate more desire from the participants to buy the products. On the contrary, the

unattractive salespersons were less likely to elicit the participants' shopping desire under the same conditions.

Audiences' characteristics can also influence the evaluation of source credibility. The study of DeBono and Harnish (1988) showed that low self-monitoring individuals agreed with the attractive source regardless of the quality of the message argument but on the contrary, high-self monitoring individuals only agreed with the attractive source when the source offered good argument. McGuire (1985) and Hass (1981) stated that perceived expertise of the source was influenced by his knowledge, education, intelligence, social status and professional achievement.

Some researchers claim that it is possible to use the same scales for different media. For example, Sunder (1999) found "striking similarity between the factor structures underlying receivers' perceptions of print and online news" (p.382), it is also important to note that people may use different criteria to evaluate credibility of different sources or channels. Meyer (1988) evaluated newspaper believability through five dimensions. These dimensions include: fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, and trustworthiness. Ognianova (1998) used semantic differential items to measure online news story credibility. These items are: factual/opinionated, unfair/fair, accurate/inaccurate, untrustworthy/trustworthy, balanced/unbalance, biased/unbiased, reliable/unreliable, thorough/not thorough, and informative/not informative.

Newhagen and Nass (1989) discovered that people use different criteria to judge credibility of TV news than they do to judge newspaper credibility. Their study suggested that people judge the credibility of newspaper based on their confidence in a newspaper's

performance as an institution, while they evaluate TV news on the performance of an aggregate of on-camera personalities. The study from Garrison, Salwen and Driscoll (2002) examined how Americans perceived the credibility of newspapers, television news, and online news. The researchers discovered that although dimensions of currency, timeliness, and up-to-date remain important in the credulity of all three news media mentioned, people evaluate news in different platforms differently. Newspaper credibility was seen to be based in balance, honesty, and currency. Television credibility was rooted in fairness. The study also showed that viewers also looked at the trustworthiness, accuracy, objectivity and completeness when they evaluate television credibility. For online news, it had to be trustworthy and believable to be credible.

This section reviewed the characteristics of the source and different criteria that may influence audiences' evaluation of source credibility. It also compared different criteria that may be used to evaluate source credibility for different media platforms. Among those criteria, some of them involve careful consideration of news content. For example, the Ognianova (1998) study has audiences to judge if the story is biased/ unbiased, accurate/ inaccurate. However, some other criteria seem to be based on a quick judgment or a simple impression based on the personality of the source. Some such factors may be the voice quality and physical appearance of the source. The following section presents the theoretical framework that may be used to explore the relationship between source factors and evaluation of source credibility.

2.4: Elaboration Likelihood Model

The present research used Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion as the theoretical foundation. ELM views people as being neither completely active nor passive in persuasion. Many factors were considered to affect people's motivation and ability to process the merits of the arguments (Cacioppo, & Petty, 1984). When conditions facilitate people's motivation and ability to engage in related thinking, the elaboration likelihood is said to be high. On the contrary, if the environment decreases people's motivation and ability to think about the related issues, it is said that the likelihood of thinking is low (Cacioppo, & Petty, 1984). ELM proposes two ways of thinking in high/low likelihood of thinking, they are: central routes and peripheral routes to persuasion (Petty, Schumann & Cacioppo, 1983; O'Keefe, 2002). With the central route, people's processing of information is extensive and serious, which involves the understanding of detailed and elaborate message content, and the content quality may play an important role in influencing readers' evaluation of the message (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). With the peripheral route, people judge based on the peripheral cues in the persuasion context, which allows people obtain a reasonable conclusion without diligently considering the merits of the message, in the absence of motivation, ability, or both to process the message. (Petty& Cacioppo, 1986). ELM suggests that readers will use central route processing only if they have both the motivation and the cognitive capability for processing the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Petty and Cacioppo (1979) mentioned that personal involvement is a main factor that can improve one's motivation to process through the central route. Therefore, a

message can be more effectively processed if it connects with the goals and aspirations of readers (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

2.5: Source Factors in Elaboration Likelihood Model

This model also emphasizes the flexible role of one persuasive factor in various situations. When the likelihood of thinking is high, if the source factor is relevant to the merit of a message, the factor would itself serve as a persuasive argument (Petty & Turnes, 2002). The source factor would be processed together with other relevant information in this situation. For example, an attractive endorser might provide persuasive visual evidence for the effectiveness of a beauty product (Petty& Cacioppo, 1984). In addition, Chaiken and Maheswaran (1994) demonstrated that when recipients under high elaboration conditions received an ambiguous message, expertise strongly affected their decision making. This suggests that in the context of news consumption, if news quality is not good enough, the perceived expertise of the reporter will strongly affect audience's evaluation on this piece of news. When the audiences' likelihood of thinking was low, expertise itself becomes a persuasion cue (Petty & Turnes, 2002). This indicates that, in the consumption of news, when the listeners' likelihood of thinking is low, it is very likely that the credibility of the source will strongly affect audiences' judgment. If the perceived expertise of the reporter is high, the listener would probably assume the news is credible, too; and if the expertise is low, the news might be considered less credible.

Therefore, I argue that during the evaluations of news quality, when the likelihood of processing through the central route is high, source credibility serves as a persuasive

argument that would be processed together with the content of the news through the central route. On the other hand, if the news is processed through the peripheral route, the source credibility serves as a peripheral cue, and has a stronger influence on judgment formation.

ELM is frequently used to examine stereotypes in studies about news. In the study by Igartua, Moral-Toranzo and Fernandez (2011), they used the origin of the immigrants in the news story as peripheral cues to examine the framing effect on audiences. This study demonstrated that the framing effect was a process governed by heuristic processing. Brader, Nicholas, Valentino and Suhay (2008) manipulated the ethnic cue and tone of the story to test the impact of the ethnic identity cue in influencing readers' attitudes towards immigration policy. The ethnic cue was manipulated by changing the picture and name of an immigrant and the tone was changed to portray governors' attitude towards the immigration. This study discovered that ethnic cues influence opinion and political action by triggering emotions, in particular, anxiety.

Besides the cues related to identity of message presenters, factors inherent to the media format may also be processed as peripheral cues during processing of messages. Igartua, Cheng, and Lopes (2003) used ELM to compare the efficiency of the affective and cognitive processes for HIV/AIDS prevention messages. To test the affective process of messages, the researchers used a music format of prevention message to activate the peripheral processing. To test the cognitive process of messages, the researchers used a dialogue format of prevention message to activate the central route processing. The participants were also provided information about the alleged risk of HIV/ADS infection

(high/low) among individuals aged 18-30. This was done to control the moderating effect of personal involvement the issue. The study about attitude towards the Citizen Journalism News (Lin, 2010) applied ELM to study the intention to read citizen journalism news. According to the researcher, when reading news, the readers take the central route when they elaborate the message in the news. On the other hand, readers take the peripheral route when they rely on cues such as the brand of the news organization. The study of Putrevu and R.Lord (1994) used ELM to study the effectiveness of comparative and noncompetitive advertising for products characterized by different levels of cognitive and affective involvement. In this study, the concept of ELM was used to categorize the advertisings into high/low level of cognitive involvement and high/low affective involvement. Different types of advertisement activate different routes with which people process the advertisement.

In the context of processing of news stories presented through radio or other audio-based electronic media, different characteristics of the newsreaders' voice may be used as a peripheral cue to evaluate the speaker. In such situations, speaker's accent may emerge as an important peripheral cue during news processing. The next section presents a review of literature discussing the role of speakers' accent and how it may influence their evaluation.

2.6: Accent as A Peripheral Cue

An old Chinese idiom says one's handwriting is his business card. In today's fast-paced world, one's accent may be frequently used as a peripheral cue to make judgments about people's identity. In such instances, people may not only make judgments about an

individual's place of origin from his accent, but may also make further evaluations about his background on other dimensions such as social status, level of education, and professional expertise.

One of the consistent finding among language attitudes is that in the absence of explicit information of the speaker's social background, listeners evaluate the standard-accented speaker with higher status traits, (competence, intelligent, successful, confident), than nonstandard speakers (Rakić Steffens & Mummendy, 2011). In the study by Rakić , Steffens and Mummendy (2011), the participants were told to rate the competence and social kills of speakers disguised as recruiters of companies, who read a same story with different accents. The results showed that speakers speaking German with a regional accent were perceived as lower in competence and hireability than those speaking standard German. Due to the absence of the information of the source, the participants formed their impression on the speakers based on their accents. This study again demonstrated that people sometimes overlook the content of the message but make their judgment on their impression on the source, which also complies with the ELM perspective that sometimes people use peripheral route instead of central route to make evaluation.

Furthermore, even with clear knowledge of the social status of the speaker, it is still possible that the listeners think that the speaker is from lower class if the speaker's accent is non-standard. For example, the research of Giles and Sassoon (1983) showed that knowing an individual's socioeconomic standing was middle class did not deter listeners from categorizing the speaker to a low status if the speaker spoke with a

nonstandard accent. In this research, a formal passage and informal passage were read in a standard accent and a Cockney accent, and the social information about the speaker was read by subjects before they heard the tape. The result showed that for a non-standard accented speaker, even if he used formal language and was known to belong to middle-class, he was still considered as someone from lower class. From the ELM perspective, the accent of the speaker, as well as the language used in the passage were two peripheral cues that indicate the identity of the speaker. However, the speaker's accent was found to be more influential in this study than the language of the passage. One of the limitations of this study was that it did not specify whether the subjects who thought the middle-class and nonstandard accented speaker was from lower class had successfully processed the social information provided before they heard the tape. If they had not processed that social information at all, the results conformed to ELM theory; but if they did process the information through central route, and still chose to follow the peripheral cue, this study would be a good example of dominance of peripheral route when the motivation for processing is present but lack of relevant information limits the ability for processing through the central route.

Likewise, in the absence of explicit information about ethnicity, listeners react to speakers with regional accent differently according to their stereotype of those groups. For example, the study by Azra, Levie-Dinur, and Karniel (2012) demonstrated that the bias of the Israeli population against Al Jazeera English (AJE) stems from a bias against all the Arab-produced news. The study suggests that changing branding elements such as the AJE Arabic logo or even the channel's name in those markets are unlikely to change

participants' perceptions the channels as long as they can identify the Arabic accent of the speaker. The audiences in this study failed to evaluate the news by its content, and they even refused to take into account the credibility of the news organization. This complies with what we discussed in the news quality and source section, that evaluating news through central route requires understanding of the news content as well as the evaluation of the source—the channel that reported the news.

The discussion in this section shows that without the information of the source, the audiences tend to evaluate a speaker based on his/ her accent. Even with the information of the source, the source's accent is more compelling than other factors in influencing audiences' evaluation. The study of Azra, Levie-Dinur, and Karniel (2012) suggested that without understanding the source, it is impossible for an audience to process through the central route and when the accent remained as the only peripheral cue, accent plays critical role in evaluating news quality.

Based on the review presented above, I argue that in the context of radio news, Chinese accent will be evaluated less positively than the mainstream American accent and this will also influence the evaluation of source credibility and the credibility of the news story.

H1: The perceived source credibility of a newsreader with an U.S. accent will be higher than the perceived credibility of a newsreader with a Chinese accent.

H2: The perceived credibility of a news story presented by a speaker with an U.S. accent will be higher than the perceived credibility of the same story presented by a speaker with Chinese accent.

The review of source credibility literature presented earlier shows that knowledge and expertise of the source may strongly influence his credibility (Hass, 1981; McGuire, 1985; Ohanian, 1990). When Chinese reporters talk about issues in China, his/her Chinese accent may be considered as a peripheral cue for his knowledge and expertise of issues in China. I argue that in the context of radio news, a Chinese accent will be evaluated more positively when the news story happened in China than when it happens in U.S., and this will also influence the evaluation of source credibility and the credibility of the news story.

H3: Perceived source credibility of a newsreader with a Chinese accent will be higher if the story is about an event in China than when the story is about an event that takes place in the U.S.

H4: Perceived credibility of a news story presented by a newsreader with a Chinese accent will be higher if the story is about an event in China than when the story is about an event that takes place in the U.S.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

3.1: Study Design

The study was conducted in two stages, a pretest and then a main study. The pretest was conducted to test the comprehensibility of the stories to be used in the main experimental study. It was also used to test the intelligibility of the speaker's U.S. accent and to make sure his Chinese accent was identifiable (See Appendix A for sample stories and pretest questionnaire). For the main study, participants were randomly assigned to four experimental groups to listen to a news recording. Participants then were asked to answer questions assessing the perceived credibility of the story and source credibility of the news recording and demographics.

Random assignment was chosen as the approach to minimize the differences among the participants in the present experiment. Random assignment is a procedure used in experiment to create multiple study groups that include participants with similar characteristics so that groups are equivalent at the beginning of the study, which helps to rule out unrelated factors as alternative explanations to the study results (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). It would also equalize some other confounding factors that the researcher might have overlooked (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

3.2: Pretest

3.2.1: Pretest: Participants and Measurements

After the IRB for the present study was approved, a pretest was conducted in order to ensure the target accent recordings were perceived to be authentic representations of each accent and message condition, and to select the story with

equivalent China and the U.S. location versions. To test the accent quality of the speaker, two audio clips for the same story were created; one in Chinese accent (Standard-Mandarin accent) and one in U.S. accent (Mid-west accent). U.S. and China versions of six news stories were presented to 42 undergraduates from the journalism program at Ohio University using an online survey. One version of the audio clip was also presented to each participant. The online survey application Qualtrics was used for this pretest. Participants were randomly assigned to two groups by Qualtrics after they entered the survey link shared by their professor. Each group read one of the two versions of the six stories, and listened to one of the two audio clips. After reading each story, participants evaluated the story for familiarity, difficulty, relevance, level of interest, likability, appeal, and believability. These characteristics were measured by using a seven point scale where a rating of 1 indicated the lowest rating on the characteristic and 7 indicated the highest rating (See appendix A for pretest questionnaires). The audio clips were measured for comprehensibility, processing difficulty, and if the speaker was speaking in Chinese or U.S. accent using a seven-point scale (See appendix A for pretest questionnaires).

3.3: Main Study

3.3.1: Participants

A total of 112 undergraduate students from Ohio University were recruited for a between- group, 2 (accent: Chinese/U.S.) X 2 (story: China based/ U.S. based) matched guise experiment. To ensure that the analysis involved only U.S. students, I screened out 3 participants who chose 1 (yes) for the question "are you an international student?".

Also, to control familiarity with China and Chinese culture, I screened out 7 students who scored higher than 5 (somewhat familiar) in questions about familiarity with China (see appendix B for the questionnaire). Therefore, the results of 101 participants were used in the t-test to compare results between four conditions. To study the correlation between the familiarity of China and source credibility, the results of 109 participants (with the 7 students who were more familiar with China and Chinese language) were examined.

3.3.2: Materials and Manipulation

This matched-guise experiment was manipulated two variables: accent of the speaker and the location of where the news story took place. The accent variable was manipulated by asking a speaker to read the news stories with both U.S. accent and Chinese accent; to avoid issues related to credibility of source media organizations, the speaker identified himself as being from the same organization for both U.S. and Chinese accent versions. The location variable was manipulated by changing the words and phrases that indicate locations. A post-test questionnaire was also involved.

3.3.2.1: News stories

Based on the findings from the pretest, a story that happened in U.S was chosen from CNN news transcripts. A Chinese version of the story was produced by replacing terms identifying U.S. locations / institutions by Chinese Institutions/locations (See Appendix A for different versions of the sample story); all the other content in the story remained same as the U.S. story (See appendix B for U.S. and China versions of the story).

3.3.2.2: Recordings

Both the U.S. version and China versions of the story were read by the speaker with both U.S. and Chinese accents. Therefore, four recordings were made: a story that happened in China read with Chinese accent, a story that happened in China read with the U.S. accent; a story that happened in the U.S read with Chinese accent, and a story that happened in the U.S. read with U.S. accent. The speaker was a student of Chinese origin who grew up in the U.S. in a Chinese family and can speak with both U.S. accent and Chinese accent.

3.3.3: Dependent Variables

3.3.3.1: News credibility

The first part of the questionnaire was designed based on Austin's apparent reality assessments (ARA). It was used to measure the perceived credibility of the news stories as well as the speaker's perceived credibility. According to Austin and Dong (1995), the conceptualization of ARA stems in the research on perceived realism, which emphasizes on fictional messages, and research on source credibility, which emphasizes anonfiction sources. Therefore, this conceptualization was constructed to measure both perceived realism and source credibility as components of story credibility (see appendix B for questionnaire). More specifically, it was used to measure to what extent that the readers rely on source or content quality to evaluate message (Austin & Dong, 1995). In my study, participants responded to questions based on ARA, asking about the accuracy, the representativeness and expertise, and the personal perspectives and perceived bias of the story on a scale of 1(negative) to 7 (positive).

3.3.3.2: Source credibility

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the understanding the credibility of the speaker in the recording. These questions were adopted from the semantic differential scales for three dimensions: safety, dynamism, and qualification designed by Berol, Lemert and Mertz (1969-1970). The study of Berol et al (1969-1970) investigated the criteria actually used by receivers in evaluating message sources. They categorized hypothesized criteria into four aspects: safety, qualification, dynamism, and sociability. In each aspect, there were specific items. For example, in the Safety group, the specific items include kind-cruel, just-unjust, calm-upset and etc. The result of this research revealed three most significant aspects and the specific items under them. The three aspects are: Safety (safe-unsafe; just-unjust; kind-cruel; friendly-unfriendly; honest-dishonest), Qualification (trained-untrained, experienced-inexperienced; skilled-unskilled; qualified-unqualified; informed-uniformed), and Dynamism (aggressive-meek; emphatic-hesitant; bold-timid; active-passive; energetic-tired).

In my study, participants evaluated these three aspects on a scale of 1(negative) to 5(positive) on specific items (see appendix B for questionnaire).

3.3.4: Procedure

Based on the protocal approved by IRB, the experiment was conducted in a computer lab with five computers. For each experiment session, five participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions and were seated on a randomly selected computer station. Participants were exposed to their respective experimental condition and the questionnaires using Media Lab, a stimulus presentation software. In each

session, the experimenter informed the participants that they would first listen to a recording made by a real reporter, and then finish a questionnaire based on their impression on the reporter. As soon as the participants finished listening to the news recording, they finished the post-test questionnaires on the same computer. After the participants finished their task, the experimenter thanked them for participating and they were informed that they have completed the experiment and could leave the lab.

3.3.5: Data Analysis

Participants' results were analyzed using independent t-test procedure in SPSS statistical software. Overall news credibility was computed by adding up the scores for all the items that evaluate the news credibility (Austin &Dong, 1995), and then dividing the score by the number of items in the scale. The overall source credibility was computed by adding up all the scores for all the items that evaluate the source credibility (Berol, Lemert & Mertz, 1969-1970), and then dividing the total by the number of the items in the scale. The overall credibility for news stories and sources were than compared to find differences on outcome variables between conditions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1: Pretest Results

The pretest was conducted in order to ensure the target accent recordings were perceived to be authentic representations of each accent and message condition, and to select the story with equivalent China and the U.S. location versions. The online survey application Qualtrics was used for this pretest. Participants were randomly assigned to two groups by Qualtrics after they entered the survey link shared by their professor. Each group read one of the two versions of the six stories, and listened to one of the two audio clips. After reading each story, participants evaluated the story for familiarity, difficulty, relevance, level of interest, likability, appeal, and believability.

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the means of the Chinese and U.S. versions of the story for each of the seven characteristics. There was no significant difference between the U.S. and China version for the story about carbon dioxide emission on all seven characteristics (See Table 1). The result of the t-test analysis revealed that the China version and the U.S. version of the carbon dioxide were equivalent on all the reported characteristics.

Table 1

Independent variables t-test for qualities between US and China version of the carbon dioxide emission story.

	Mean (SD) for story evaluations		t-test for Equality of Means		
	U.S. version	China version	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Familiarity	3.76 (1.411)	3.90 (1.446)	-.324	40	.748
Difficulty	3.76 (1.411)	3.90 (1.446)	-.324	40	.748
Relevance	3.86 (1.276)	3.00 (1.643)	1.888	40	.066
Interesting	3.38 (1.627)	3.33 (1.713)	.092	40	.927
Likability	3.43 (1.207)	3.29 (1.347)	.362	40	.719
Appealing	3.48 (1.537)	3.33 (1.528)	.302	40	.764
Believability	4.90 (1.179)	5.24 (1.446)	-.819	40	.418

There was no significant differences between means on understanding of the U.S. accented speaker (*M*=5.10, *SD*=1.55) and Chinese accented speaker (*M*=4.62, *SD*=1.36), t (40) = 1.06, p>0.05. However, there was a significant difference in the processing difficulty for the U.S. accented speaker's message (*M*=5.05, *SD*=1.36) and the Chinese accented speaker's message (*M*=4.10, *SD*=1.30), t (40) = 2.30, p<0.05. Participants evaluated on a seven-point scale for each audio clip if they thought that the voice was Chinese accented; they also evaluated each audio clip on if it was presented in U.S. accent. For the Chinese accented clip, the difference between ratings as U.S. accent (M=2.10, SD=1.52) and as Chinese accent (*M*=4.52, *SD*=1.60) were significant, t (39) =-4.98, p<0.05. For the U.S. accented clip, the difference between ratings as U.S. accent

(*M*=5.60, *SD*= 1.70) and as Chinese accent (*M*= 2.71, *SD*=1.59) were significant, t (39) = 5.63, p<0.05 (See table 2).

Table 2

Independent variables t-test for audio qualities between the U.S. accent and China accent recordings.

	Mean (SD) for accent evaluation		t-test for Equality of Means		
	U.S. version	China version	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
I could understand what the speaker was saying	5.10 (1.55)	4.62 (1.36)	1.057	39	.297
It was easy for me to process the information	5.05 (1.36)	4.10 (1.30)	2.301	39	.027

Based on the pretest results, the story about carbon dioxide was selected as the story to be used in the main experiment. The speaker used in the pretest was qualified as the speaker for the main experiment.

4.2: Main Study Results

4.2.1: Speaker Accent and Source and Story Credibility

H1: The perceived source credibility of a newsreader with an U.S. accent will be higher than the perceived credibility of a newsreader with a Chinese accent.

H2: The perceived credibility of a news story presented by a speaker with an U.S. accent will be higher than the perceived credibility of the same story presented by a speaker with a Chinese accent.

A total of 109 undergraduate students from Ohio University were recruited for a between- group, 2 (accent: Chinese/U.S.) X 2 (story: China based/ U.S. based) matched-guise experiment in March of 2015 (See table 3 and 4 for demographic descriptions). Among the participants, 95 students are from the 18-20 year-old group, and 14 students are from the 21-24 year-old group.

Table 3

The gender and educational level of the main experiment participants.

	Number	Percent
Gender		
• Male	19	17.6
• Female	82	75.9
Educational Level		
• Freshman	44	40.7
• Sophomore	37	34.3
• Junior	16	14.8
• Senior	4	3.7

Table 4

Crosstabs of demographics for four conditions. Figures in each cell present the number of participants in that category.

Condition (Story/Accent)	Gender		Age		Educational Level	
	Male	Female	18-20	21-24	Freshman and Sophomore	Junior and Senior
China/Chinese	5	21	22	4	21	5
China/U.S.	5	18	20	3	19	4
U.S./Chinese	5	21	22	3	20	6
U.S./U.S.	4	22	23	3	21	5

To test H1 and H2, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the source and story credibility for the same U.S. story (Condition 3 vs. Condition 4)/ China story (Condition 1 vs. Condition 2) presented in both Chinese and U.S. accents. Source credibility and news credibility were compared in both situations to test H1 and H2 accordingly.

There were no significant differences in the overall source credibility between condition 3(U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) (M=3.38, SD=0.55) and condition 4 (U.S. story presented by U.S. accent) (M=3.60, SD=0.50), t (50) = -1.54, p > 0.05 (Table 5). Additionally, no significantly differences were found in the overall source credibility between condition 1(China story presented by Chinese accent) (M=3.26, SD=0.44) and condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent)(M=3.40, SD=0.72), t (47) = -0.26, p > 0.05 (Table 6). There was also no significant differences in the overall credibility for news story between condition 3 (U.S. story presented Chinese accent) (M=4.26, SD=0.49) and condition 4 (U.S. story presented by U.S. accent) (M=4.37, SD=0.33), t (50) =-0.92, p>0.05 (Table 5), and no significant differences in the overall credibility for news story between condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) (M=4.31, SD=0.47) and condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent) (M=4.22, SD=0.37), t (47) =0.72, p>0.05 (Table 6).

Though there were no significant differences in overall source credibility between the conditions of interest (H1: Conditions 3 and 4, and conditions 1 and 2), I conducted comparisons between condition means for individual items in the source credibility scale

to identify components of source credibility with difference in evaluations for Chinese and U.S. accented speakers.

For condition 3 (U.S. story in Chinese accent) and Condition 4 (U.S. story in U.S. accent), significant differences were found for the items measuring qualification, degree of being trained, the degree of timid, and experience. For all these items, means for U.S. accented speaker were higher than the means for Chinese accented speaker (Table 7)

For conditions 1 (China Story in Chinese Accent) and Condition 2 (China Story in U.S. Accent), significant differences for items measuring Dynamism, Danger, the degree of timid, and passiveness were observed (Table 8).

Table 5

Independent t-test for credibility qualities between condition 3(U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 4(U.S. story presented by U.S. accent).

	Mean (SD) for overall credibility qualities		t-test for Equality of Means		
	Cond. 3	Cond. 4	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
News credibility Overall	4.26 (0.49)	4.37 (0.33)	-.922*	43.611	.361
Source credibility overall	3.38 (0.55)	3.60 (0.50)	-1.543	50	.129

*Equal variances not assumed

Table 6

Independent t-test for credibility qualities between condition 1(China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 2(China story presented by U.S. accent).

	Mean (SD) for credibility qualities		t-test for Equality of Means		
	Cond.1	Cond. 2	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
News credibility Overall	4.31 (0.47)	4.22 (0.37)	.715	47	.481
Source credibility overall	3.26 (0.44)	3.40 (0.72)	-.295	47	.797

Table 7

Independent t-test for individual source credibility qualities between condition 3(U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 4(US story present by U.S. accent)

	Mean (SD) for story evaluations		t-test for Equality of Means		
	condition 3	condition 4	T	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Source Credibility_ Qualification	3.17 (.797)	3.67 (.695)	-2.401	49.084	.020
Degree of timid	3.15 (.967)	4.12 (.909)	-3.697	50	.001
Degree of being trained	3.00 (1.095)	3.92 (.977)	-3.207	49.355	.002
Experience	2.88 (1.033)	3.65 (1.018)	-2.706	50	.009

Table 8

Independent t-test for individual source credibility qualities between condition 1(China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent).

	Mean (SD) for story evaluations		t-test for Equality of Means		
	condition 1	condition 2	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Source Credibility Dynamism	2.71 (.808)	3.32 (.658)	-2.843	47	.007
Danger	4.04 (.662)	3.43 (1.080)	-2.389	47	.021
Degree of timid	2.81 (1.201)	3.52 (.898)	-2.332	47	.024
Passiveness	2.96 (1.038)	3.78 (.850)	-3.003	47	.004

4.2.2: Story Location and Source and Story Credibility

H3: Perceived source credibility of a newsreader with a Chinese accent will be higher if the story is about an event in China than when the story is about an event that takes place in U.S.

H4: Perceived credibility of a news story presented by a newsreader with a Chinese accent will be higher if the story is about an event in China than when the story is about an event that takes place in U.S.

To test H3 and H4, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the story credibility of a same China accent present both China story (Condition 1) and U.S. story (Condition 3). Source credibility was compared between condition 1 and condition 3 to test H3, and news credibility was compared between the two to test H4.

Overall, no significant differences were found in the overall source credibility between condition 1(China story presented by Chinese accent) (*M*= 4.31, *SD*=4.26) and condition 3 (U.S. accent presented by China accent) (*M*= 4.26, *SD*= 0.49), t (50) =-0.16, p> 0.05 (Table 9). Also, no significant differences were found in the news credibility in condition 1(*M*=4.31, *SD*=0.47) and condition 3(*M*=4.24, *SD*=0.47), t (50) =0.37, p>0.05 (Table 9).

Table 9

Independent t-test for credibility qualities between condition1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent).

	Mean (SD) for credibility qualities		t-test for Equality of Means		
	Cond. 1	Cond. 3	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
News credibility Overall	4.31 (0.47)	4.24 (0.47)	.374*	50	.710
Source credibility overall	4.31 (4.26)	4.26 (0.49)	-.158	50	-.022

*Equal variances not assumed

Though there were no significant differences in overall source credibility between the conditions of interest (H3: Conditions 1 and 3), I conducted comparisons between condition means for individual items in the source credibility scale to identify components of source credibility with difference in evaluations for Chinese and U.S. accented speakers.

For condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and Condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent), significant differences were found for the items

measuring dynamism and meekness. For both items, means for U.S. accented speaker were higher than the means for Chinese accented speaker (Table 10).

Table 10

Independent t-test for source credibility qualities between condition1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent).

	Mean (SD) for story evaluations		t-test for Equality of Means		
	condition 1	condition 3	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Source Credibility_ Dynamism	2.71 (.808)	3.16 (.812)	-2.011	49.999	.050
Meekness	2.50 (.860)	3.08 (.845)	-2.440	50	.018

To study the correlations between individual items on source credibility and familiarity of China and Chinese language, the results of the seven students who were screened out in previous analysis due to their familiarity with China and Chinese language were included in the analysis (See table 11 for correlations). Results showed that those more familiar with china were more likely to evaluate Chinese source as less honest, meeker, and more passive. Those more familiar with Chinese language were more likely to evaluate Chinese source as less honest, more dangerous, less just and more timid.

Table 11

Significant Pearson correlations coefficient for correlations between familiarity with China, familiarity with Chinese language, and individual items on source credibility.

	Familiarity with China	Familiarity with Chinese Language
Source Honesty	-.198*	-.195*
Danger	n.s.	-.243*
Just	n.s.	-.189*
Meekness	-.193*	n.s.
Degree of timid	n.s.	-.202*
Passiveness	-.227*	n.s.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

n.s. : correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The present study compared the source and story credibility between Chinese and U.S. accented newsreaders and stories originating in China and U.S. A matched-guise experiment was conducted to examine the U.S. audience response to U.S accented speaker and Chinese accented speaker as the location of the story changes between U.S. and China. A U.S. story about carbon dioxide was selected from the pretest as the news story to be presented to the participants. It was made into a China version by changing words and phrases that indicate U.S. to words that indicate China. A speaker, who can do both a U.S. accent and a China accent when speaking in English, read each version of the story in both accents. During the experiment, the participants were randomly assigned to different conditions. After they listened to the audio clip, they answered questions evaluating the credibility of the news story and the newsreader. An independent t-test was used to analyze the participants' answers. The findings did not support the hypothesis that the accent of the reader and location of the story would influence the source and story credibility. However, partial findings on source credibility were observed which are consistent with previous language attitude studies that reveal stereotype of non-standard speaking speakers.

5.1: Speaker Accent, Story Location, and Source Credibility

H1 predicted that the U.S. accented speaker would be considered more credible than the Chinese accented speaker. There were no significant differences in overall source credibility in condition 3 (U.S story presented by Chinese accent) vs. condition 4 (U.S. story presented by U.S. accent). Also no significant differences in overall source

credibility were found in condition 1(China story presented by Chinese accent) vs. condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent). Although in the first chapter, it was discussed the issue of China being given a negative stereotype in U.S. according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2010), this result suggests that the stereotype has not penetrated into all aspects. The participants trusted the Chinese accented and U.S. accented reporter equally when they reported about the neutral stories similar to this carbon dioxide emission story.

H3 predicted that when the China accented speaker reports about an event happened in China, he would be considered more credible than him reporting a U.S. event. This hypothesis was not supported by the data of condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) vs. condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) and there were no significant differences in the overall source credibility.

These results might be due to the audience's lack of ability to effectively process accent and location related cues to influence source credibility differentially in different conditions. In the pretest, the China accent was proved to be identifiable, so the failure to recognize the location of the story should be the cause of the reported results.

According to ELM theory, participants' reliance on the speaker's accent to evaluate the source credibility may be high when the likelihood of thinking is low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Also, the recognition of the story location as a peripheral cue requires the cue to be strong enough to be noticed. The appearance frequency for location indicators was low—the appearances of only five location indicators in a short time might not have made it an adequately strong location cue. This could have contributed to

the failure of story location as a peripheral cue and may have resulted in lack of influence of location on story and source credibility.

Additionally, Petty and Cacioppo (1984) claimed that people need both motivation and ability to process information through the central route. The failure to increase the perceived source credibility might also be attributed to participants' lack of motivation to process the information in the story, which indicates that the selected story was not motivational enough.

On the other hand, it might be a reflection of a failure to control the recordings. Although in the pretest, it was shown that the speaker's speaking was qualified because his China accent is obvious enough to be observed but also understandable, yet in the main experiment, maybe the control was not strong enough for the two China accented recordings in terms of speaking speed, emotion control, and etc. The variation of the story content might arouse different emotions in the speaker, so that the speaker might demonstrate different speeds and attitudes when he reads different stories. This might suggest that future studies should test the recordings that would be used in the main experiment in the pretest, rather than to test the voice and accent only.

Though there were no significant differences between condition 3 (U.S. story presented Chinese accent) and condition 4 (U.S. story presented by US accent), condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 2 (China story presented by US story), and condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 3(U.S. story presented by China accent) on overall source credibility, comparison of

individual items in the scale showed that on some aspects of source credibility, U.S. and Chinese accented speakers were evaluated differently.

Consistent with a previous study (Rakić Steffens & Mummendy, 2011), significant differences were found in the dynamism and qualification aspect of source credibility between condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 4 (U.S. story presented by US accent). Specifically, the results showed that the U.S. accented speaker was considered less timid, and better trained, and more experienced than the Chinese accented speaker. These results suggest that even though there were no significant differences in the overall source credibility, the US accented speaker was still believed by the US audiences to be more dynamic and qualified.

Additionally, between condition 1(China story presented by China accent) and condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent), the China accent speaker was considered more passive, more timid and more dangerous than the U.S. accent speaker. Significant differences were also found between condition 1 (China story presented by Chinese accent) and condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent). It was shown that the Chinese accented speaker sounded meeker when he reports about the story in China. These results might indicate a failure to associate the location of the story and the speaker's identity indicated by the accent. It is possible that the likelihood of thinking was so low that the participants were not motivated to even search for the location-related peripheral cues, especially when those indicators only appeared for five times in the story. Therefore, it suggests the emphasizing of the indicators for the location of the story for the future study.

The tendency for a U.S. audience to rate foreign accent as more timid and passive is consistent to many previous language attitude studies (Cargile, & Giles, 1998). This might trace back to the stereotype that Asians are quiet, obedient and passive in person. However, the Asians as a whole group might be perceived dangerous due to the negative impressions about the country due to its style of governance and its perception as an economic threat. Therefore, the seemingly opposite description "timid" and "danger" appeared simultaneously.

5.2: Speaker Accent, Story Location, and News Credibility

H2 predicted that the story presented by the U.S. accent would be perceived more credible than the one presented with a Chinese accent. This hypothesis was not supported by the data for news credibility in condition 3 (U.S. story presented by Chinese accent) vs. condition 4 (U.S. story presented by U.S. accent), and condition 1(China story presented by China accent) vs. condition 2 (China story presented by U.S. accent). This might indicate audiences' lack of ability to associate the location of the story. H4 predicts that the China accent would increase the news credibility for the story happened in China. This hypothesis was not supported by the overall news credibility in situation condition 1 vs. condition 3.

Additionally, in an ELM perspective, when the likelihood of thinking is low, the expertise of the source may influence people's evaluation of the news quality (Petty & Turnes, 2002). In H1, there were no significant differences in the perceived source credibility of the U.S. accented speaker and Chinese accented speaker. This might also contribute to the result that no differences were found in the news credibility.

5.3: Limitations and Future Directions for Research

The first limitation of this experiment might is the control for recordings, especially the China accent recordings. It seems like the China accent was controlled within an acceptable range: being identifiable but not undermining understanding. However, recording made of different times still can be a lot different within that acceptable range, and these differences might finally undermine the quality of the recordings. Secondly, although the analysis only used the data from the U.S. students who had little experience in China and had little knowledge about Chinese language, these students were still used to different cultures and accents as they interact with international students and faculty members frequently. These interactions may influence their attitudes towards foreign accents and their evaluations, in light of their face to face interactions, may be less influenced by stereotypes prevalent in the society. Thirdly, although random assignment was used to equalize the variances among participants, it is still possible that the participants who were more interested in environmental issues took the central route to process the information and therefore did not evaluated the credibility based on the speaker's accent and story location. So, for the future study, it is suggested to measure the participants' likelihood of thinking in the experiment and use it as a screening criterion.

As we discussed earlier, participants might not be motivated enough to process the story because the story is a neutral story about environmental problem. Though this could have contributed to the equivalence of the Chinese and U.S. versions of the story, it could also have reduced the motivation of participants to process the story. For future

studies, I suggest to use stories that put more weight on the location of the story. For example, stories have qualities related to international issues, conflicts, etc. Moreover, different genre of news reporting can cause different level of likelihood of thinking, too. For example, a feature story might be more involving, and provide more scope for use of location cues. Different genre of media can also make difference. For instance, the webpage with videos and pictures can be more engaging than a simple audio clip, and can also be used to make the location cues more salient. Finally, the selection of the speaker is worth studying, too. For instance, the age of the speaker, gender of the speaker, and voice quality of the speaker might cause different response from audiences. Other factors, such as reporters' appearances, and the characteristics of the channel, which release the news (e.g. the screen size of the television), might also be manipulated to study their influence to the news and source credibility.

To study more about the influence of the familiarity of the language to audiences, foreign languages with positive stereotype can also be used to compare with standard language. Also, comparing languages that have similar background might provide different patterns of findings. For example, it might be easier to control the qualities on all aspects between the British accent and U.S. accent. For the U.S. audiences, a British accent can be used to see if it would be rated more credible than a U.S. accent reporting a U.S. event.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE STORIES FOR THE PRETEST

Sample Transcript 1: U.S. Version

A swarm of earthquakes buzzes underground in Nevada

(CNN) -- Hundreds of small earthquakes have rumbled under northwestern Nevada like a seismic drumroll since midsummer, and in recent days, they have built to a crescendo.
This does not necessarily mean a big one will come, state seismologists said, but they added that it's good to be prepared, just in case.
Seismologists refer to such quake groupings as swarms, and the U.S. Geological Survey has detected them regularly. They can produce thousands of small tremors.
In September, for example, about 500 miniquakes struck southeastern California in about two days. The largest topped out at a magnitude 3.8 -- a strength that could be felt but was not dangerous.

But the Nevada swarm buzzing in and around the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge has gone on since July 12.
In recent days -- since October 30 -- they have grown stronger, with three over magnitude 4.0.
The strongest one weighed in Tuesday at magnitude 4.6 -- approaching the threshold of a lightly damaging quake.
"There is a slightly elevated risk of a larger earthquake while the swarm is active," said seismologist Ian Madin from neighboring Oregon.
This swarm looks much like two previous swarms that produced somewhat strong earthquakes, the Nevada Seismological Laboratory says.

In 1968, in nearby Adel, Oregon, a swarm lasting several months produced three quakes of about magnitude 5. "The Adel swarm caused moderate damage," the NSL said.
Another, shorter swarm near Reno, Nevada, in 2008 led to a magnitude 5 quake and caused moderate local damage.
The vast majority of the current Nevada swarm's quakes have been undetectable to people walking around on top of them. Since they started four months ago, Nevada Seismological Laboratory has recorded around 550 quakes of magnitude 2 or higher, and 42 with intensities above 3.0.
The center of the activity is in a sparsely populated area, the USGS says. There are two towns about 40 miles away, each with a population of about 2,500.

Sample Transcript 1: China Version

A swarm of earthquakes buzzes underground in Sichuan

(CNN) -- Hundreds of small earthquakes have rumbled under northwestern Sichuan, China like a seismic drumroll since midsummer, and in recent days, they have built to a crescendo.
This does not necessarily mean a big one will come, government seismologists said, but they added that it's good to be prepared, just in case.
Seismologists refer to such quake groupings as swarms, and the China Geological Survey has detected them regularly. They can produce thousands of small tremors.
In September, for example, about 500 miniquakes struck southeastern Yunnan in about two days. The largest topped out at a magnitude 3.8 -- a strength that could be felt but was not dangerous.

But the Sichuan swarm buzzing in and around the National Wildlife Refuge has gone on since July 12.
In recent days -- since October 30 -- they have grown stronger, with three over magnitude 4.0.
The strongest one weighed in Tuesday at magnitude 4.6 -- approaching the threshold of a lightly damaging quake.
"There is a slightly elevated risk of a larger earthquake while the swarm is active," said seismologist Ming Wu from neighboring Qing Hai Province.
This swarm looks much like two previous swarms that produced somewhat strong earthquakes, the Sichuan Seismological Laboratory says.

In 1968, in nearby Xining, Qinghai, a swarm lasting several months produced three quakes of about magnitude 5. "The Xining swarm caused moderate damage," the government said.
Another, shorter swarm near Chengdu, Sichuan, in 2008 led to a magnitude 5 quake and caused moderate local damage.
The vast majority of the current Sichuan swarm's quakes have been undetectable to people walking around on top of them. Since they started four months ago, Sichuan Seismological Laboratory has recorded around 550 quakes of magnitude 2 or higher, and 42 with intensities above 3.0.
The center of the activity is in a sparsely populated area, the government says. There are two towns about 40 miles away, each with a population of about 2,500.

Sample Transcript 2: U.S. Version

29 million Americans have diabetes — but a quarter of them don't realize it

The statistics are staggering. More than 29 million Americans, or 9.3 percent of the U.S. population, have diabetes — but a quarter of them don't yet realize it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An additional 86 million Americans have pre-diabetes, which is marked by higher-than-normal blood-sugar levels and puts them at an elevated risk of developing diabetes. The WHO estimates that nearly 350 million people worldwide have the condition.

Year after year, diabetes exacts a massive human and economic toll. Those who have it are at a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and blindness, and of losing toes, feet and legs to amputation. The risk of death for adults with diabetes is 50 percent higher than it is for adults without the disease, according to the CDC.

"The costs of diabetes are enormous, and they are growing," Herman said. "People with diabetes account for a substantial portion of the total cost of health care in the United States."

Medical expenses tend to be twice as high, on average, for people with diabetes than for those without the disease. Collectively, it costs the U.S. health system an estimated $250 billion a year, including major amounts of lost work and productivity. That includes billions spent on inpatient care, doctor's visits, medication and supplies such as glucose monitoring strips. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) estimates that treating patients with the disease accounts for more than $1 of every $5 spent on health care in the United States.

"It has affected all segments of the population," said Edward Gregg, chief of the epidemiology and statistics branch of the CDC's diabetes division. "But it hasn't affected everyone equally."

The risks generally increase with age, but a growing number of people younger than 20 are diagnosed with diabetes. Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans all have higher rates of the disease than whites, and those who live in areas of extreme poverty have been hit particularly hard.

The CDC found that diabetes diagnoses increased between 1995 and 2010 in every U.S. state, including by 50 percent or more in 42 states. During that period, the total number of cases in the country more than doubled.

Despite the immense number of people who have diabetes, it has not triggered national alarm. Other illnesses, such as cancer and Alzheimer's disease, often garner more attention. One reason is that diabetics sometimes go years before experiencing any decline in their quality of life. When complications do surface, they often do so gradually and manifest in various ways. People don't always recognize diabetes as the source of severe health problems.

Sample tTranscript 2: China Version

29 million Chinese have diabetes — but a quarter of them don't realize it

The statistics are staggering. More than 29 million Chinese, or 9.3 percent of the China population, have diabetes — but a quarter of them don't yet realize it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An additional 86 million Chinese have pre-diabetes, which is marked by higher-than-normal blood-sugar levels and puts them at an elevated risk of developing diabetes. The CSL estimates that nearly 350 million people worldwide have the condition.

Year after year, diabetes exacts a massive human and economic toll. Those who have it are at a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and blindness, and of losing toes, feet and legs to amputation. The risk of death for adults with diabetes is 50 percent higher than it is for adults without the disease, according to the CDC.

"The costs of diabetes are enormous, and they are growing," Herman said. "People with diabetes account for a substantial portion of the total cost of health care in China."

Medical expenses tend to be twice as high, on average, for people with diabetes than for those without the disease. Collectively, it costs the China health system an estimated $250 billion a year, including major amounts of lost work and productivity. That includes billions spent on inpatient care, doctor's visits, medication and supplies such as glucose monitoring strips. The Chinese Diabetes Association (CDA) estimates that treating patients with the disease accounts for more than $1 of every $5 spent on health care in China.

"It has affected all segments of the population," said Ming Wu, chief of the epidemiology and statistics branch of the CDC's diabetes division. "But it hasn't affected everyone equally."

The risks generally increase with age, but a growing number of people younger than 20 are diagnosed with diabetes. The minorities, such as, Man people, Zhuang people, Bai people all have higher rates of the disease than the majority, Han people, and those who live in areas of extreme poverty have been hit particularly hard.

The CDC found that diabetes diagnoses increased between 1995 and 2010 in every China province, including by 50 percent or more in 30 provinces. During that period, the total number of cases in the country more than doubled.

Despite the immense number of people who have diabetes, it has not triggered national alarm. Other illnesses, such as cancer and Alzheimer's disease, often garner more attention. One reason is that diabetics sometimes go years before experiencing any decline in their quality of life. When complications do surface, they often do so gradually and manifest in various ways. People don't always recognize diabetes as the source of severe health problems.

Pretest Questionnaires

Questionnaire: attitude towards the story, familiarity, and believability of the story

Please respond to the following statements about the story by selecting your response from the 7- point scale.

I feel that the story content is								
Not at all familiar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Familiar
Easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Difficult to understand
Not at all relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant to me
Not interesting at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Interesting
Not likable at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likable
Not appealing at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very appealing
Not believable at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very believable

Questionnaire: Evaluation of speaker's voice

Please respond to the following statements about the audio clip you just listened to by selecting your response from the 7- point scale.

1. I could understand what the speaker was saying

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. It was easy for me to process the information provided by the speaker.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. I can identify that the speaker has a Chinese accent.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B: SELECTED STORY FOR THE MAIN EXPERIMENT

U.S Version

U.S. Carbon Pollution Rises, Reversing Downward Trend

U.S. carbon dioxide emissions from burning oil, gas, coal and other fossil fuels shot higher last year, reversing a prior three-year decline, the Energy Information Administration announced this week in its Monthly Energy Review.

And that's not all.

On Tuesday, the Environmental Protection Agency released its fourth round of Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program data, showing that large industrial facilities – factories, power plants and other energy-hungry hubs – had spewed 20 million more metric tons of heat-trapping carbon into the atmosphere last year than the year before – an increase of 0.6 percent.

"Climate change, fueled by greenhouse gas pollution, is threatening our health, our economy and our way of life – increasing our risks from intense extreme weather, air pollution, drought and disease,"EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said in a statement.

The uptick in emissions might, ironically, be a result of good news elsewhere: strong economic growth fueled by renewed manufacturing, hefty Wall Street profits and a less anemic housing market.

"We see yet again from the rising CO2 emissions from the U. S. in 2013 that economic growth – which was strong in 2013 – drives up emissions except where states and nations have specific low-carbon economic plans, such as California and Denmark," says Dan Kammen, energy professor at the University of California-Berkeley.

The strengthening economy, in fact, might also be behind last year's uptick in coal consumption, which causes far more air pollution than natural gas consumption.

"Economic growth was fast, so even though new natural gas plants are coming on, the demand for power was up and coal plants came back online," Kammen says. "Overall coal demand is falling – that means coal prices are declining, and so there's this incentive to use more coal."

China version

China Carbon Pollution Rises, Reversing Downward Trend

China carbon dioxide emissions from burning oil, gas, coal and other fossil fuels shot higher last year, reversing a prior three-year decline, the Energy Information Administration announced this week in its Monthly Energy Review.

And that's not all.

On Tuesday, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its fourth round of Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program data, showing that large industrial facilities – factories, power plants and other energy-hungry hubs – had spewed 20 million more metric tons of heat-trapping carbon into the atmosphere last year than the year before – an increase of 0.6 percent.

"Climate change, fueled by greenhouse gas pollution, is threatening our health, our economy and our way of life – increasing our risks from intense extreme weather, air pollution, drought and disease,"EPA Administrator Fu Wang said in a statement.

The uptick in emissions might, ironically, be a result of good news elsewhere: strong economic growth fueled by renewed manufacturing, hefty Peking Street profits and a less anemic housing market.

"We see yet again from the rising CO2 emissions from China in 2013 that economic growth – which was strong in 2013 – drives up emissions except where states and nations have specific low-carbon economic plans, such as Liao Ning Province and Denmark," says Su Zhang, energy professor at the Tsinghua University.

The strengthening economy, in fact, might also be behind last year's uptick in coal consumption, which causes far more air pollution than natural gas consumption.

"Economic growth was fast, so even though new natural gas plants are coming on, the demand for power was up and coal plants came back online," Zhang says. "Overall coal demand is falling – that means coal prices are declining, and so there's this incentive to use more coal."

Questions for demographic information

1. What is your Gender?
   Male Female
2. What is your age? (Please Type your age in the space below)

3. Are you an International Student?
   Yes No

4. What is your educational Status? Please select from the options provided below.

   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate Student
   f. Other

Questionnaire for news credibility measurement

Direction: Based your own evaluation of the news story you just heard, please indicate a number from 1 to 7 for the series of statements below, depending on the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Accuracy

1. On the whole, I find this story accurate

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Things are the way the story made them seem.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. The sources quoted in this story are telling the truth.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I think this reporter is trustowrthy.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Representativeness:

5. The sources quoted in this story really know the truth about what happned.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. On the whole,I think that this story is complete.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. This reporter might not have had access to important facts that would change the story significantly.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. There may be more to this story than the news made it appear.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. I think the reporter may have been misled by some of the resources.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Expertise:

10. The reporter was an expert on this topic.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. I think this newspaper could have gotten some of the facts wrong on this story.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. I think the reporter was competent (capable of doing a good job)?

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Personal Perspective & Perceived Bias Index

Personal perspective

13. On the whole, I consider this story biased.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. I think this media sensationalized some aspects of this story.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. I think this medium trivalized some aspects of the story.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Perceived Bias

16. I think the story portrays everyone involved farily.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. I think the reporter may have been biased.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Questionnaire for source credibility measurement

Please evaluate the newsreader on the qualities presented below by selecting one of the numbers on each scale.

Safety

Dishonest				Honest
1	2	3	4	5

Cruel				Kind
1	2	3	4	5

Dangerous				Safe
1	2	3	4	5

Unfriendly				Friendly
1	2	3	4	5
Unjust				Just
1	2	3	4	5

Dynamism

Meek				Aggressive
1	2	3	4	5
Hesitant				Emphatic
1	2	3	4	5
Timid				Bold
1	2	3	4	5
Passive				Active
1	2	3	4	5

Qualification

Untrained				Trained
1	2	3	4	5
Inexperienced				Experience
1	2	3	4	5
Unqualified				Qualified
1	2	3	4	5
Unskilled				Skilled
1	2	3	4	5
Uninformed				Informed
1	2	3	4	5

Questions about Familiarity with China

Please respond to the following statements by selecting your response from the options provided.

1. I have visited China in the past.

Yes/ No

2. I have lived in China for more than one month in the past.

Yes/ No

3. I am familiar with Chinese culture.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I am familiar with Chinese language/s.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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