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THE INFLUENCE OF LINGUISTIC STYLE: A MATCHED-GUISE EXPERIMENT ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF SOURCE ACCENT, ARGUMENT QUALITY, AND ISSUE INVOLVEMENT ON PERSUASION

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DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Communication and Information Studies
at the University of Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE INFLUENCE OF LINGUISTIC STYLE: A MATCHED-GUISE EXPERIMENT ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF SOURCE ACCENT, ARGUMENT QUALITY, AND ISSUE INVOLVEMENT ON PERSUASION

For decades, persuasion researchers have demonstrated that under certain conditions, the success of a persuasive appeal depends, at least in part, on perceptions of a source (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). In the same way, a person's linguistic style, such as their accent, has been shown to have a powerful impact on listeners' judgments (Dragojevic et al., 2018). However, despite many real-world persuasive settings requiring an oral component, the impact of a source's accent on persuasion outcomes has received comparatively little empirical attention (Hosman, 2002). Moreover, few of the existing investigations use well-established theories of persuasion to guide findings or address the conditions under which source accent does and does not impact persuasion (for exceptions, see Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012). Accordingly, this dissertation applied the Elaboration Likelihood Model as a theoretical framework to understand the fundamental processes involved in the interplays of source accent, argument quality, and issue involvement on persuasive outcomes. An experiment implementing the matched-guise technique was conducted to examine the effects of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under low and high involvement conditions. During the experiment, student participants (N = 347) listened to a persuasive message advocating for implementing comprehensive exams at their university the following year (high involvement condition) or in 10 years (low involvement condition). The message contained either strong or weak arguments and was delivered either by a native or foreign-accented source. Compared to the native-accented source, the foreign-accented source was more likely to be categorized as foreign, reduced listeners' processing fluency, and was less persuasive. In addition, participants were more persuaded when the message contained strong rather than weak arguments, and when participants had low rather than high involvement. Contrary to expectations, the effects of source accent on persuasion were not moderated by participants' level of involvement. Taken together, results suggest that source accent can influence persuasion regardless of listeners' level of elaboration. Theoretical and practical implications related to persuasive communication are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Language Attitudes, Source Accent, Elaboration Likelihood Model, Persuasion, Involvement, Argument Quality

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CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922)

The ability to persuade—to convince a stalwart listener or sway the undecided masses—is a prized human communicative skill. Social scientific research investigating the phenomenon has demonstrated that messages intended to persuade usually contain implied or overt arguments supporting an advocated position (O'Keefe & Jackson, 1995). These embedded arguments naturally vary in their objective or perceived quality. Typically, strong or high-quality arguments (e.g., logical, verifiable facts) lead to more successful persuasive outcomes than weak or low-quality arguments (e.g., illogical, specious claims) (Carpenter, 2015). However, under certain conditions, the success of a persuasive appeal can, at least in part, be guided by other variables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). Receiver perceptions of source characteristics, such as expertise (e.g., McNeill & Stoltenberg, 1988), physical attractiveness (e.g., Chaiken, 1979), or similarity (e.g., Busch & Wilson, 1976) have frequently been shown to enhance, detract, or even dictate the outcome of a persuasive message (Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). In a similar yet predominantly overlooked fashion, a person's linguistic style, such as their accent (i.e., manner of pronunciation), "appears to have a powerful influence on the judgments of perceivers," suggesting it also may have an impact on persuasive appeals (Foon, 1986, p. 521). Consequently, this dissertation seeks to examine the relative influence of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under different conditions.

Source Accent and Persuasion

Empirical literature examining the phenomenon of the social evaluations of speech (i.e., language attitudes) has consistently found that speakers are readily judged on various evaluative

traits based solely upon their accent (Giles & Watson, 2013). Similar to other forms of social evaluations (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), these accent-based judgments are systematically arranged along two evaluative dimensions: status (e.g., educated, intelligent) and solidarity (e.g., warm, friendly). How a particular accent may fare on these evaluations varies. For instance, foreign-accented speakers tend to be judged less favorably along both evaluative dimensions in comparison to native-accented speakers (Fuertes et al., 2012). These language attitudes are thought to reflect two related processes.

Firstly, a speaker's accent may act as a cue to social categorization, leading to the activation of relevant stereotypes, which guide subsequent judgments. Status stereotypes are largely based on perceived socioeconomic status (Fiske et al., 2002). In contrast, solidarity stereotypes tend to reflect ingroup loyalty (Giles & Watson, 2013). Given that people tend to stereotypically associate most foreigners with lower socioeconomic status and categorize them as outgroup members (i.e., nationally), foreign-accented speakers are frequently judged less favorably on both dimensions in comparison to native-accented speakers (see Fuertes et al., 2012; for exceptions, see Stewart, Ryan, & Giles, 1985).

Secondly, a listener's relative ease or difficulty in cognitively processing accented speech (i.e., processing fluency) varies for different accents (Giles & Watson, 2013). This metacognitive experience can act as a cue to speaker evaluations, with decreased fluency leading to more negative evaluations (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017). Since foreign-accented speech is typically more difficult to process than native-accented speech (e.g., Cristia et al., 2012), foreign-accented speakers tend to be more negatively evaluated than native-accented speakers.

Despite many real-world persuasive settings requiring an oral component, the influence of a source's accent on persuasion outcomes has received comparatively little empirical attention

(Dragojevic, Savage, Scott, & McGinnis, 2018; Hosman, 2002). Moreover, very few of the investigations utilize well-established theories of persuasion to guide or explain findings (for exceptions, see Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012). Nevertheless, on the foundation of these limited, mostly atheoretical, and typically main effect studies (e.g., are some accented speakers more persuasive than others?), a general finding has emerged: foreign-accented speakers from non-Anglo regions (e.g., Latin America or Asia) are typically perceived as less persuasive than their native-accented counterparts (e.g., DeSheilds, Kara, Kaynak, 1996; Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991). The dominant explanation for this finding is that accents which elicit more favorable social judgments tend to be considered more persuasive (e.g., Dragojevic, Savage, Scott & McGinnis, 2018; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012). Consequently, since non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are typically judged less favorably than native-accented speakers along the evaluative dimensions of *status* and *solidarity*, they are, in turn, frequently perceived as less persuasive (e.g., DeSheilds, Kara, Kaynak, 1996; Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991).

However, despite strong empirical support for this singular explanation, some studies have displayed alternate and inconsistent findings when certain message qualities (e.g., Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012) or listener characteristics are manipulated (e.g., DeShields et al., 1997; DeShields & Kara, 2011). It is, therefore, reasonable to propose that the effects of source accent on persuasion may be contingent on other variables, such as message (e.g., argument quality) and listener characteristics (e.g., issue-involvement). The elaboration likelihood model (ELM: Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b) outlines how these variables might interact to influence persuasion.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

Contemporary theories of persuasion, such as the well-established ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b), propound two relatively distinct processing routes to attitude change: The systematic and methodical route (i.e., central processing) and the quick and recursive route (i.e., peripheral processing). When receivers process a persuasive appeal via the central route, they rely on the relevance and quality of message arguments to guide their evaluation of the appeal. Under central processing, messages that contain strong arguments are typically more persuasive than messages that contain weak arguments (Carpenter, 2015; O'Keefe, 2013). In contrast, when receivers process a message via the peripheral route, they rely on basic inferential (or *peripheral*) cues or heuristics (e.g., source expertise) to guide their evaluations of the appeal (Kitchen et al., 2014). Under peripheral processing, messages that contain positively-valenced peripheral cues (e.g., expert source) are typically more persuasive than messages that contain negatively-valenced cues (e.g., inexpert source; Brinol & Petty, 2009; O'Keefe, 2013).

The ELM often considers source characteristics, such as source accent, as "extrinsic aspects of the communication situation" (O'Keefe, 2013, p. 139), which are processed independently of message content and thus typically function as peripheral cues during the evaluation process (Chaiken, 1987; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012). In light of this, source accent should have minimal impact on persuasion when a message is processed centrally because receivers are focused on message content and base their judgments on argument quality rather than source characteristics; strong arguments should be more persuasive than weak arguments, regardless of source accent. On the other hand, when a message is processed peripherally, source accent should guide persuasion; positively evaluated sources (e.g., native-accented speakers)

should be more persuasive than negatively evaluated sources (e.g., foreign-accented speakers), irrespective of argument quality.

The processing route undertaken depends on receivers' willingness (motivation) and capability (ability) to *elaborate*, or engage in issue-relevant thinking (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). When receivers' motivation and ability to process a message are both high, receivers engage in high levels of elaboration and process the message via the central route. Conversely, when receivers' motivation and/or ability to process a message are low, receivers engage in low levels of elaboration and process the message via the peripheral route.

Various factors determine elaboration likelihood by influencing receivers' motivation and/or ability to process a message. One factor that has received considerable research attention is receivers' level of *issue involvement*, or the degree to which receivers perceive the message topic as personally relevant (O'Keefe, 2013). As involvement increases (i.e., the message is deemed more personally relevant), receivers' motivation to engage in elaboration increases. Accordingly, under high involvement conditions, persuasion typically depends on argument quality, rather than source characteristics; conversely, under low involvement conditions, persuasion typically depends on source characteristics, rather than argument quality (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002; O'Keefe, 2013).

Based on what has been described so far, the relative impact of argument quality and source accent across high and low issue involvement conditions should be as follows. Under high issue involvement conditions, persuasion should primarily depend on argument quality, and source accent should have little effect. All else being equal, strong arguments should be more persuasive than weak arguments, regardless of the source's accent. Under low issue involvement conditions, persuasion should depend more on source accent, and argument quality should have

little effect: All else being equal, native-accented sources should be more persuasive than most foreign-accented sources, regardless of argument quality.

However, all else is not equal. Namely, the above understanding describing the interaction between source accent, argument quality, and issue involvement on persuasive outcomes is based on the premise that a source's accent strictly functions in the role of a peripheral cue during the evaluation process. However, the ELM postulates that persuasive variables can, in some contexts, take on multiple roles (i.e., central cue, peripheral cue, biasing cue, elaboration moderator; Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002). This dissertation argues that source accent is one such variable.

Source characteristics can function not just as peripheral cues but also in multiple ways depending on the context (Brinol & Petty, 2009). In particular, recent findings in language attitudes (e.g., Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017) and persuasion (e.g., Guyer, Fabrigar, & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018) suggest that a source's accent may also function as an *elaboration moderator*, by influencing recipients' *ability* to engage in extensive issue-relevant thinking. As noted earlier, foreign-accented speech is typically more difficult to process than native-accented speech (Cristia et al., 2012; Munro & Derwing, 1995a, 1995b). In the persuasive context, this increased effort to process speech may function similarly to other source characteristic variables (e.g., speech rate, see Smith & Shaffer, 1995) that moderate elaboration via their disruptions to a receiver's concentration (i.e., as distractions, see Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). For instance, if a respondent is considerably distracted (i.e., medium to high levels, see Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976) their ability to elaborate is often reduced. Subsequently, if the increased effort to process foreign accent speech is considerable (i.e., medium to high levels), it is likely to also impede a receiver's *ability* to elaborate, leading them to engage in more peripheral processing. This

suggests that even under high involvement conditions, source accent may play a role because it can influence receivers' level of elaboration and determine how they process the message.

If this is true, then the prior description of the relationship between source accent, argument quality, and issue involvement on persuasion needs to be qualified. Specifically, under high issue involvement conditions, strong arguments should be more persuasive than low-quality arguments when the source's accent is native. When the source's accent is foreign, a receiver's ability to process the message is likely to be diminished, increasing the probability that they engage in peripheral processing. Subsequently, if a receiver is peripherally processing, the quality of message arguments should have little, if any, effect, even under high involvement conditions. In sum, this suggests that accent can play multiple roles in persuasion: it can function as a peripheral cue and an elaboration moderator.

General Overview and Organization

This dissertation via an experimental design tests the above propositions by examining the relative influence of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under low and high issue involvement conditions. Utilizing the ELM as a theoretical framework to understand the guiding fundamental processes, two focal propositions are explored.

Firstly, under low issue involvement conditions, source accent should function as a peripheral cue. Low involvement is likely to promote low elaboration and lead to peripheral processing. Under peripheral processing, persuasion should depend on source accent, not message quality: Native-accented sources should be more persuasive than their foreign-accented counterparts, regardless of the quality of message arguments.

Secondly, under high involvement conditions, source accent can function both as an elaboration moderator and as a peripheral cue. High involvement is likely to promote high

elaboration and lead to central processing, as long as receivers' ability to process the message is not diminished. When the source is a native-accented speaker, these conditions should be satisfied and persuasion should depend on argument quality, not source accent: Strong arguments should be more persuasive than weak arguments, regardless of the source's accent. In contrast, when the source has a particularly strong or unfamiliar foreign accent (e.g., a non-Anglo variety), these conditions may necessitate that a receiver expend considerable cognitive effort in order to process the message. Subsequently, the increased effort required will likely diminish a receiver's ability to elaborate, leading them to engage in peripheral processing. In this instance, the source's foreign accent functions initially as an elaboration moderator lowering receiver elaboration, and then as a peripheral cue. Consequently, the persuasive outcome will once again be contingent on the evaluations of the source's accent; as under low elaboration, the message's arguments should have little, if any, effect.

Together, these main propositions suggest that certain source accents (in this case, non-Anglo foreign-accented English speech) may influence both receivers' ability to elaborate and persuasion itself. If this is indeed the case, it could have far-reaching implications for foreign-accented English speakers as the finding would insinuate that their persuasive messaging would not, primarily, be evaluated on its informational merit, but rather be judged on non-content-based evaluations. In line with the language attitudes discussed above, this typically leads to unfavorable persuasive outcomes. Consequently, the examination of conditions under which source accent impacts persuasion warrants experimental investigation.

In order to establish context, this dissertation first provides an overview of language attitudes literature, focusing on accented speakers. Second, it moves on to a detailed breakdown of the limited empirical research detailing how language attitudes influence message

persuasiveness. It then proceeds to describe the central tenets of the ELM and explain in detail how its two routes to information processing and attitude change provide theoretical elucidation regarding the function and role that source accent plays in persuasion. Lastly, it proposes an experiment designed to investigate the conditions under which source accent does and does not impact persuasion under the ELM's specific theoretical mechanisms.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The rationale presented in chapter one is based on the elaboration likelihood model's (ELM) underlying processes. The ELM as a foundational theoretical framework aids in explicating the various ways receivers process a source's accent and under what conditions it will or will not influence persuasion. This chapter provides a review of the literature of language attitudes and the ELM. Specifically, this section's review of relevant literature is divided into four main parts: 1) language attitudes; 2) language attitudes and persuasion; 3) the elaboration likelihood model; and 4) the present study.

Language Attitudes

Speakers of various languages and language styles (e.g., accents, dialects) frequently engage in communication. These interactions often lead people to readily form impressions of others based on the language or language style they employ in the given communicative context (Giles & Watson, 2013). The analysis of these evaluative reactions to language and their behavioral consequences is the domain of language attitudes (Dragojevic, 2016).

Language attitudes refer to people's evaluative judgments toward speakers of different language varieties (Dragojevic, 2016). A portion of a person's speech style is idiosyncratic. However, other aspects of a person's speech (e.g., pronunciation) are systematically linked to, and indexical of, their various regional, national, ethnic, and other social identities (Giles & Watson, 2013). Exigent literature examining the elicited judgments toward speech has shown that a speaker's accent (i.e., their means of pronunciation) is a particularly salient linguistic marker used by listeners to derive evaluations of a given speaker.

Listener evaluations (e.g., perceptions of friendliness, intelligence) of speakers' accents are theorized to reflect two concurrent processes. Firstly, a speaker's accent may act as a cue to

social categorization, leading to the activation of relevant stereotypes, which guide subsequent judgments. Second, the level of difficulty experienced by a listener to cognitively process speech varies for different speakers' accents. Subsequently, a listener's speech processing experience acts as a metacognitive cue to their speaker evaluations, with accented speech considered more difficult to process leading to more negative evaluations (Dragojevic, 2019). These two processes are discussed next.

Social Categorization and Stereotyping

Our daily life is filled with encounters with individuals. Nevertheless, we tend to organize and structure many of these people into clusters (i.e., social groups) that, we perceive, share similar characteristics (Kinzler, Shutts, & Correll, 2010). Distinctions used to denote social group membership vary in numerous ways (e.g., region, nationality, race) and include how a person speaks (Lippi-Green, 2012). A person's accent is a salient and commonly used marker to infer association with a particular social group membership (Labov, 2006). In fact, it is hypothesized to be one of the primary ways "in which we divide the social world" (Kinzler, Shutts, & Correll, 2010, p. 584). For instance, studies using infants have shown that a social preference for similar accented speakers even trumped other typically salient indexical means of social categorization, such as race (Kinzler et al., 2009).

Since a speaker's accent is a salient and reliable way to identify social group membership, it is frequently used as a language-based means to categorize people into social groups (Kinzler, Shutts, & Correll, 2010). However, while listeners are highly aware of the differences between accented speakers, a particular accent does not consistently engender the same categorization in all situations. Any given individual can belong to several social groups, hence the salient social category brought to the forefront of a person's mind largely depends on

context. Additionally, a listener's categorization of a speaker's accent may not be consistent or accurate. Consequently, a listener's precision of categorization largely depends on their linguistic and social knowledge of the given accent (Gnevsheva, 2018).

For example, American listeners have been shown to reliably distinguish between native speakers and foreign English-accented speakers (e.g., Carrie & McKenzie, 2018). Specifically, a speaker's foreign accent has been demonstrated to be a salient characteristic indicative of the person not being born in the country (i.e., an immigrant) and not being a native speaker of English (e.g., English was learned as a second language) (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Kinzler, Dupoux, & Spelke, 2007). Consequently, US listeners readily link US English accented speakers with an American or native identity, and foreign-accented speakers with a foreign identity. This ideological association between accent and nationality, along with the ability to distinguish between speakers, typically leads listeners to categorize US accented speakers as American and foreign-accented speakers as foreign or '*not from America*' (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012; Shuck, 2004). Additionally, depending on the listener's linguistic and social knowledge of a given foreign speaker's accent, they may further subdivide 'foreign' into more specific social categories, such as the speaker's perceived region (e.g., Europe, Asia) or country of origin (e.g., Germany, China). Subsequently, different foreign-accented speakers can also be "categorized as belonging to different foreign groups" (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020, p. 4).

Once a speaker is categorized as belonging to a particular social group, assumptions about attributes of those group members (e.g., their intelligence or friendliness) are elicited and automatically attributed to the accented speaker (Ryan, 1983). These stereotypes, which may or may not be close to the social realities they represent, subsequently influence a listener's

evaluation of the given accented speaker. Social stereotypes are primarily organized along two evaluative dimensions: status/competence and solidarity/warmth (Dragojevic, 2019; Fiske et al., 2002; Fuertes et al., 2012).

Status-based stereotypes (e.g., how intelligent or competent someone is) are primarily based on perceptions of socio-economic status (Fiske, et al., 2002; Fuertes et al., 2012). Individuals from social groups that are thought to be socio-economically successful are frequently evaluated more favorably on status-based traits. In comparison, people perceived as members of lower socio-economic groups are less favorably evaluated on status-based traits (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). Since speakers' accents function as a marker of their social group membership, and social groups vary in actual or stereotypical socio-economic success, a speaker's accent may be indexical of their categorized group's socio-economic position. Consequently, a speaker's accent can lead to stereotype attributions of status. For instance, Americans tend to associate those they view as fellow national members with higher socio-economic status than those they view as international members (i.e., foreigners) (Lee & Fiske 2006; Lippi-Green, 2012).

However, not all foreign-accented speakers are denigrated by American listeners in this way (see Lindemann, 2005). Some foreign social groups are perceived to be representative of prosperous regions or countries. For instance, speakers from some Anglosphere countries, such as those using Received Pronunciation (RP) from England, are associated with high social economic success. Consequently, RP speakers, due to their high social economic success association tend to be rated equally favorably on status-based traits as native US speakers by Americans (e.g., Bayard et al., 2001; Stewart, Ryan, & Giles, 1985). While RP speakers offer an exception, in the US, they are numerically a foreign-accented minority. Most foreign-accented

speakers in the US originate from non-Anglo regions, such as Mexico/Latin America and Asia (US Census, 2020), and Americans typically associate these regions with lower social economic success. Since non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are perceived to belong to social groups or regions associated with lower social economic success, they are often, comparatively, attributed lower status-based traits in subsequent evaluations (Giles & Watson 2013).

Solidarity-based stereotypes (e.g., how friendly or nice someone is) tend to reflect bias in favor of the ingroup (e.g., ingroup favoritism) and perceptions of intergroup competition (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick 2007; Giles & Watson, 2013). Individuals perceived to be from one's own group (i.e., in-group) are typically endowed with positive solidarity attributions. In comparison, people perceived as not belonging to one's social group (i.e., out-group) or from socially competitive or threatening groups are attributed negative solidarity-based attributions (Dragojevic, 2016; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007, Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor 1977). In the US, public attitudes toward various categories of foreigners are typically negative (e.g., Kessler & Freeman, 2005; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002) and foreign-accented speakers, on average, are attributed with more negative solidarity stereotypes than native US speakers (Lippi-Green, 2012). The relative denigration on solidarity evaluations likely occurs because foreign-accented speakers are, by definition, characterized as members of a national out-group (i.e., foreign) and potentially viewed as competing for resources. In contrast, native US accented speakers, perceived as members of the listener's national in-group (in the US), are presumed to be cooperative and share similar social goals, thus leading them to be perceived more favorably in solidarity evaluations.

In sum, a speaker's accent can act as a cue to social categorization. Americans tend to categorize native-accented English speakers as "American" and foreign-accented English

speakers as "foreign." Once categorized, relevant stereotypes are activated and guide subsequent judgments, with non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers typically rated less favorably on both status (e.g., intelligent) *and* solidarity (e.g., friendly) traits relative to native US English speakers.

Recent research in language attitudes suggests that the categorization and stereotype-based account described above is one of two primary processes that can play a role in speaker evaluations (Dragojevic, 2019). The second process influencing speaker evaluation involves *processing fluency*. This refers to a listener's relative ease or difficulty in cognitively processing accented speech, and varies for different accented speakers (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017).

Processing Fluency

The metacognitive experience of processing cognitive tasks (i.e., thoughts about thought processes) varies on a continuum from highly effortless (fluent) to highly effortful (disfluent) (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009). A person's interpretation of this experience can act as a cue to subsequent evaluations of the task and its associated persons (Schwarz, 2015). Highly fluent cognitive tasks generally lead to favorable evaluative judgments of the task (Winkielman, Schwarz, Fazendeiro, & Reber, 2003). Consequently, highly fluent experiences that are associated with people lead to an increase in positive attributions towards those people, such as an increase in perceived credibility (e.g., Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010), intelligence (e.g., Oppenheimer, 2006), or liking (e.g., Reber, Winkielman, & Schwarz, 1998). In contrast to high fluency tasks, cognitive tasks with low fluency generally elicit unfavorable evaluative judgments towards the task or person, due to the high (perceived) effort required to process the task (Winkielman, Schwarz, Fazendeiro, & Reber, 2003).

Like any cognitive task, speech processing has been demonstrated to be similarly characterized by its extent of effort, leading speech by some speakers to be perceived as more difficult to process than others (Cristia et al., 2012). Specifically, when speech is perceived as unfamiliar or dissimilar to a listener's own, it is typically deemed harder and more effortful to process. The more foreign-accented speech is unfamiliar or dissimilar to a native US listener's own speech (e.g., Cristia et al., 2012; Munro & Derwing, 1995a, 1995b), the more it potentially disrupts and reduces the listener's processing fluency (e.g., Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). This disruption then leads to negative evaluations of the speaker (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017). In this context, there are two underlying mechanisms primarily guiding the outcome: *naïve theories* and associated *affect* (Dragojevic, 2019).

Naïve theories refer to the various learned or acquired assumptions that guide people's domain-specific judgments of the information they are receiving and why it is easy or difficult to process (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Dragojevic, 2019). In other words, naïve theories "bridge the gap between the experience of fluency and its implications for a particular judgment," by imposing inference, such as a speaker's assumed status and solidarity (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009, p. 2; Shawarz, 2015). For instance, in a communication context, a receiver of a message may have the belief that the effectiveness of the communication and their own resultant interaction is predominantly the responsibility of the sender (Lippi-Green, 2012). Consequently, any disruptions that impact the message's clarity and its communicative effectiveness tend to be disproportionately attributed to the sender. Specifically, people may attribute their disfluent processing experience to the speaker's inability or unwillingness to communicate more clearly, which, in turn, can promote lower status and solidarity ratings, respectively (Dragojevic & Giles,

2016). As a result, foreign-accented speakers tend to be rated less favorably than native-accented speakers because the former's speech is more difficult to understand.

When information is easy to process, a person experiences more pleasant momentary feelings about the task than when it is more difficult to process (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009). Thus, the processing fluency of a given cognitive task is also hedonically marked: fluent processing elicits *positive affect*, whereas *disfluent processing* elicits *negative affect* (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Dragojevic, 2019). This associated *affect* is then drawn upon to make subsequent judgments (Shawarz, 2015). The task of processing a speaker's style of speech functions in a similar way.

When speech processing is fluent, the associated affect it elicits is positive, favorably biasing language attitudes. In contrast, disruptions, or difficulties in processing lead to disfluency, eliciting negative affect, which can then negatively bias a listener's language attitudes. For example, disruptions to a receiver's processing fluency from external noise (e.g., Dragojevic & Giles 2016) or a speaker's non-native accent (e.g., Lev-Ari & Keysar 2010) indirectly impacts language attitudes via affect (Dragojevic, 2019; Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017). In this way, foreign-accented speakers may be rated less favorably than native-accented speakers because the former elicit a more negative affective reaction during the cognitive task

Language Attitudes and Persuasion

Persuasive communication is the study of "any message that is intended to shape, reinforce, or change the responses of another, or others" (Stiff & Mongeau, 2016, p. 10). Compared to other contextual veins within language attitudes, persuasive messages delivered by various accented speakers have received surprisingly little empirical attention (Dragojevic,

Savage, Scott, & McGinnis, 2018; Hosman, 2002). Despite this dearth, experimental research has demonstrated that source accent can impact a variety of persuasive outcomes. For instance, the variety of accents used to deliver a persuasive message can influence the overall *attitude* toward the advocated position (e.g., Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012), *purchase intentions* (e.g., DeSheilds, Kara, Kaynak, 1996; Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991), and *message acceptance* (e.g., Dragojevic, Savage, Scott & McGinnis, 2018). Many of these studies primarily investigated the main effects of whether some accented speakers were more persuasive than others. Within these studies, a general finding has been shown to emerge.

Predominantly, appeals delivered by native US accented speakers (e.g., SAE) tend to be more persuasive than appeals delivered by non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers (e.g., DeSheilds, Kara, & Kaynak, 1996). This is in line with the earlier discussion on social categorization and stereotyping at the beginning of this chapter. Specifically, foreign-accented speakers, such as those from non-Anglo or non-native English-speaking foreign countries, tend to be less favorably evaluated than native-accented speakers from the US, even allowing for notable exceptions such as RP speech (Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012).

The explanation for this general finding, therefore, expands the previous discussion—certain accented speakers, such as native English speakers, elicit more favorable social judgments. In turn, this upgrading in social evaluations leads them to be considered more persuasive (Hosman, 2002). Since non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are typically judged less favorably than native-accented speakers along the evaluative dimensions of status and solidarity, they are frequently perceived as being less persuasive in comparison (DeSheilds, Kara, Kaynak, 1996; Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991).

Recent research comparing regional US accented speakers provides further evidence for this explanation by explicating "the cognitive processes underlying the effect" (Dragojevic, Savage, Scott & McGinnis, 2018, p. 8). In their study, Dragojevic, Savage, Scott, and McGinnis (2018) demonstrate that the effect of a source's accent on persuasion is mediated, at least partly, by receivers' evaluations of the source's status. In other words, accented speakers who are attributed more status tend to be more persuasive. Consequently, because non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are typically attributed less status than native-accented speakers, the former tend to be less persuasive (Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991). Although solidarity attributions are also positively associated with persuasiveness, their effect appears to be less pronounced than the effect of status attributions (Dragojevic, Savage, Scott, & McGinnis, 2018).

Based on what has been described so far in this section, non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are typically judged less favorably than native-accented speakers along the evaluative dimensions of status and solidarity. Due to the comparative downgrading on these evaluations—particularly on status-based traits— non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are, in turn, frequently perceived as less persuasive than their native-accented counterparts.

However, despite strong empirical support for this explanation, some studies have displayed alternate or seemingly inconsistent findings when certain message qualities (e.g., Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012) or listener characteristics are manipulated (e.g., DeShields, 2015; DeShields et al., 1997; DeShields & Kara, 2011). For example, empirical research grounded in theory demonstrates that a message's quality (i.e., how strong or weak are its embedded arguments) largely dictates the persuasive outcome, even more so than a message's source (Carpenter, 2015; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). Research in this domain typically shows that strong or high-quality arguments (e.g., logical,

verifiable facts) lead to more successful persuasive outcomes than weak or low-quality arguments (e.g., illogical, specious claims), regardless of the source (Carpenter, 2015).

Furthermore, an appeal's success not only depends on a message's argument quality but also on the extent to which a receiver is willing and able to engage in *issue-relevant thinking about* the issue and the arguments contained within an appeal (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Research indicates that receivers who carefully examine and scrutinize the merits of the information presented in an appeal are more likely to be influenced by a message's quality (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). This careful examination by receivers typically means that appeals containing strong quality arguments will increase a message's perceived persuasiveness and weaker quality arguments will decrease the appeal's persuasiveness. However, if a receiver is unable or unwilling to scrutinize an appeal's information, the quality of the message matters little. In this instance, the success of the persuasive outcome is more likely to be dictated by factors external to its information, such as the source's accent (Carpenter, 2015; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

The current literature has not fully explored the potential effects of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under varying degrees of *issue-relevant thinking*. Consequently, it is reasonable to propose that the impact of source accent on persuasion may be contingent on these variables, which have been shown to interact with and influence persuasive outcomes in other contexts (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). Therefore, to examine the potential impact of source accent and these variables on persuasion, it is prudent to overview the guiding explicative theory: the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

The following section will provide an overview of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), focusing on how a source's accent typically functions within its theoretical framework.

First, a brief overview of the ELM will be provided. Second, the ELM's underlying processes and their impact on a person's degree of elaboration will be explicated. Third, the section will explore the pertinent factors that impact the persuasive outcomes under both the peripheral and central processing routes, and subsequently, based on the current literature, focus on how a source's accent is generally thought to function via each route. Lastly, to provide the rationale that a source's accent may be functioning in previously unexplored ways, the impact of source factors and how they can function in multiple roles will be reviewed.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b) is a general theory of attitude change that offers a dual mental process framework for understanding the fundamental processes involved in effective persuasive communication messages. The ELM posits that "variations in the nature of persuasion" depend on the likelihood that a receiver of a persuasive appeal is willing and/or able to engage in *elaboration* (i.e., issue-relevant thinking) pertinent to the issue at hand (O'Keefe, 2008, p. 1475). Based on the extent of elaboration, which ranges on a continuum from low to high, two relatively distinct processing routes to attitude change are possible: the systematic and methodical route—*central processing*—and the quick and recursive route—*peripheral processing*.

The *central processing* route of attitude change occurs when a receiver's elaboration is relatively high. This form of systematic processing involves the receiver carefully examining the issue-relevant merits of the information presented in the advocacy (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Under high elaboration likelihood conditions, a receiver scrutinizes the message's arguments and information. Their perception and subsequent evaluation of a message's advocated position (e.g.,

pro or anti-attitudinal) and the quality of its arguments (e.g., strong/weak, logical/specious) drive the persuasive outcome (e.g., strong messages are more persuasive than weak messages).

In contrast to central processing, the *peripheral processing* route represents the persuasion process employed under lower elaboration levels (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). This processing type occurs when receivers are not engaged in careful or deliberate issue-relevant thinking about the appeal's information. Consequently, the careful consideration of a presented message's true informational merit is typically sidestepped in favor of simpler decision-making procedures (i.e., heuristics) to evaluate the advocated communication (Kitchen et al., 2014). For example, a receiver using peripheral processing may be persuaded by either how attractive or credible they perceive the source (i.e., sender) of the message to be, rather than by scrutinizing the actual arguments presented in the message. In comparison to higher elaboration levels, which engage central processing, attitudes shaped under lower levels of elaboration are typically less temporally persistent and less predictive of subsequent behavior (O'Keefe, 2013).

Elaboration Continuum: Influences on the Degree of Elaboration

The central and peripheral routes to persuasive information processing are considered two distinct avenues towards attitude formation or change. However, the route a receiver takes does not have to be solely one or the other, as the path is viewed as an *elaboration likelihood continuum* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). The elaboration continuum refers to the probability that a receiver will engage in effortful thought, with more elaborate processing at one end of the continuum and effortless and less elaborate message processing at the other. Consequently, the relative importance of the decision-making information or procedures that typically guide the persuasive outcome under each processing route varies depending on the extent of a receiver's elaboration. For example, in a hypothetical context, if a receiver were at the lowest point on the

continuum, they would only use simple decision procedures (i.e., heuristics) or peripheral cues to guide their decisions. However, the more a receiver elaborates (engages issue-relevant thinking) the more they move up the elaboration likelihood continuum. Subsequently, simple decision procedures become less and less critical in guiding their ultimate evaluation, with the message's information merits becoming ever more important. A variety of factors determine elaboration likelihood; the two considered the most influential are a receiver's desire (i.e., *motivation*) and the capability (i.e., *ability*) to engage in issue-relevant thinking (O'Keefe, 2008).

Motivation to Elaborate. The willingness to engage or be *motivated* to evaluate a presented appeal affects the persuasive outcome by influencing the degree of a receiver's elaboration. Several underlying factors have been found to impact a receiver's degree of motivation for engaging in elaboration, such as the receivers' accountability (e.g., Harkins & Petty, 1981) and interaction anticipation (e.g., Chaiken, 1980). A receiver's *involvement with* (and/or the relevance of) the topic or issue at hand and their *need for cognition* are often considered the two most prominent factors influencing the receiver's degree of motivation (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; O'Keefe, 2008; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1986).

Issue Involvement. The degree of the topic's personal relevance to the receiver is defined or described as the level of *issue involvement* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). When a receiver perceives a message as personally relevant, they will be more motivated to elaborate. This increased level of involvement increases the likelihood that a receiver will expend more cognitive effort on scrutinizing the message's embedded arguments in order to ensure that they hold the correct attitude (O'Keefe, 2013). In other words, as a receiver's level of issue involvement increases (i.e., the topic is deemed more personally relevant), their motivation to

engage in elaboration also increases. Consequently, this increase in elaboration increases the likelihood the receiver will process the message centrally (O'Keefe, 2008).

Need for Cognition. Regardless of the importance of the issue, some receivers intrinsically find great pleasure in engaging in cognitive tasks than others. This "difference among individuals in their tendency to engage in and enjoy thinking" is conceptualized as their *need for cognition* (Cacioppo & Petty 1982, p. 116). Receivers who have a strong need for cognition are typically more motivated to elaborate as they enjoy engaging cognitive effort. Consequently, the stronger a person's need for cognition, the more likely they are to want to closely examine a message's content and scrutinize its arguments. In contrast, receivers with a low need for cognition are typically less motivated to elaborate as they innately tend to avoid engaging in cognitive effort, even when they are capable of doing so (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

Ability to Elaborate. The second factor that fundamentally establishes the elaboration level is a receiver's *ability* to process message information (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002). When a receiver has the ability to elaborate extensively, they can closely examine the given information, scrutinize it, and present counterarguments (O'Keefe, 2008). This extensive engagement in issue-relevant cognition (i.e., high elaboration) leads a receiver to primarily process information centrally, which increases the likelihood that the strength of a message's arguments will guide the persuasive outcome. However, various personal and outside factors can impact a receiver's ability to elaborate, such as their self-validation (Briñol & Petty, 2009) or the number of times a given message is repeated (Cacioppo & Petty, 1989). Three particular factors are considered prominent in the context of persuasive verbal messages: the presence of *distraction* (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976), the message's level of *complexity* (Hafer,

Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996), and a receiver's *prior knowledge* of the issue (Wood & Kallgren, 1988).

Distraction. Severe distractions (i.e., medium to high levels, Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976) to a receiver's ability to comprehend a message typically reduce elaboration levels, leading to peripheral rather than central processing of the information. Since considerable distractions typically lower elaboration, a distraction can act to either increase message persuasiveness or reduce it. This variation in the persuasive outcome largely depends on whether the message's claim is pro- or counter-attitudinal to the predilection of the receiver's dominant thought processes (e.g., evoking counter arguments or favorable thoughts) (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976).

When a receiver interprets a message's content, they gauge the source's position relative to their own. Subsequently, if they perceive the sender's attitudinal position in the message to be similar to their own (i.e., pro-attitudinal), they are likely to agree with the advocated position in the message, which then generates favorable thoughts. However, if the source's stance appears counter to their own (i.e., counter-attitudinal), the receiver will be prone to negative or counter argumentative thoughts about the advocated position (O'Keefe, 2008).

For instance, if a receiver engages in high levels of elaboration and a persuasive message is counter-attitudinal and has a weak argument, a successful persuasive outcome is unlikely. The reduction in persuasiveness occurs because the receiver is almost certainly centrally processing, which, in this context, leads them to generate fewer positive thoughts and engage in counter argumentation based on the message's unfavorable information (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). However, severe distractions inhibit a receiver's reception or understanding of the argument, lowering their level of elaboration. Accordingly, a distraction can increase a message's

persuasiveness if it then reduces the receiver's ability to produce counter argumentative thoughts by leading them to process the information peripherally instead of centrally (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). For messages with strong arguments, the situation is reversed. Since appeals with strong arguments typically elicit positive cognitive responses in receivers, their reception of a message's argument is inhibited if they are distracted. This, in turn, lowers a receiver's elaboration level, increasing the probability of peripheral processing, and thus reducing the potential for favorable thought production elicited from the message's convincing information. Subsequently, the message's persuasiveness is also likely to be reduced (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976).

Distractions to a receiver's ability to elaborate are not always so severe that they redirect information processing to the peripheral route. For instance, if a receiver is *motivated*, with a relatively minor distraction causing an impact on their *ability*, their reception of the argument within the appeal may still be centrally processed. (Buller, 1986; Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976; Woodall & Burgoon 1981). In this context, the elaboration likelihood pattern can be seen to be curvilinear. For instance, this curvilinear relationship stipulates that strong arguments with no distractions present can become more persuasive if minor distractions (e.g., minor external noise) become present (Petty, Wells, Brock, 1976). The increase in a receiver's effort to focus on comprehending the message's information raises their elaboration likelihood, functioning in a way that it reroutes or increases a receiver's attention towards the appeal's strong quality information. However, if the distraction increases to such a level that the receiver can no longer comprehend the message, or the receiver's attention is directed towards the distractor causing the disruption (e.g., the external noise), their ability to engage in extensive elaboration decreases. Subsequently, the decrease in elaboration reduces the impact and influence of the appeal's strong

arguments, typically leading to less successful persuasive outcomes. Moreover, if the persuader is perceived to be the source of the distraction, not only does elaboration decrease, but so do evaluations of the source's credibility (Baron & Miller, 1973; Woodall & Burgoon, 1981).

Message Complexity. Persuasive messages perceived as complex are typically less persuasive than messages perceived as easier to understand (Hafer, Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996). The impact of message complexity on persuasive messages is especially notable when the claim has strong arguments. In this situation, a complex message is typically less persuasive because the language used is more challenging for a receiver to process mentally. This reduction in a receiver's comprehension and reception of the strong arguments reduces their elaboration likelihood, and thus the importance of the message's issue-relevant arguments. However, if the appeal's arguments are strong and easy to comprehend, they are typically more memorable and lead to more favorable persuasive outcomes (Hafer, Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996).

In contrast, if the arguments are weak, the easy-to-understand message, while still memorable, will be less persuasive as its poor quality generates less issue relevant thoughts. In this context, if, instead, the weak arguments are complex, the reduction in a receiver's comprehension can, in some cases, be beneficial to the persuasive outcome. A positive result typically occurs when aspects extrinsic to the message are positively valenced (e.g., an attractive source) and the message's complexity lowers a receiver's elaboration so much that it causes the receiver to engage in peripheral processing. As a result, the positive valenced aspect is used to inform the message judgment rather than the weak arguments (see Hafer, Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996).

Prior Knowledge. Factors pertinent to the individual can also influence a receiver's ability to engage in extensive elaboration (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002). Specifically, a

receiver's *prior knowledge*, often described in the persuasive context as their *working knowledge*, can influence a receiver's ability to elaborate (Wood, Rhodes, Biek, 1995). A receiver's working knowledge refers to their beliefs, knowledge, and prior experiences within a particular informational domain that are elicited when presented with an attitudinal claim referencing said domain (Wood & Kallgren, 1988). Within a particular domain of information, a receiver's knowledge varies on a low to high spectrum.

Receivers who have higher levels of knowledge about a message's given topic typically engage in more extensive elaboration as they have the ability to fully comprehend and evaluate the given information's merits (Wood, Rhodes, Biek, 1995). In this situation, if a receiver is motivated, their increased ability to scrutinize message arguments increases elaboration and the likelihood of processing information centrally. Under the engagement of central processing, when message arguments are weak, a receiver is less likely to be persuaded than if message arguments were strong (Wood, Kallgren, & Priesler, 1985). This finding suggests that receivers with higher levels of knowledge are more critical of message arguments, as they are able to evaluate the merits of the persuasive message by relating its information to their own extensive knowledge. Therefore, if the contrasted information is perceived as acceptable or correct (e.g., strong message arguments), it will typically lead to successful persuasive outcomes. However, if the information is perceived as unacceptable or incorrect (e.g., weak message arguments), the persuasive outcome is less likely to be successful.

Receivers who have little knowledge and may be unfamiliar with the message's topic often engage in lower elaboration levels as they are unable to scrutinize the presented arguments thoroughly (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002; Wood &Kallgren, 1988). Subsequently, even if a receiver is motivated, the reduction of elaboration may be substantial enough to lead the

receiver to engage in peripheral processing. In this situation, the quality of a message's arguments typically have little impact on the persuasive outcome, as the outcome is primarily guided by the aspects extrinsic to the message and not on the evaluative comparison of a message's merits with one's knowledge on the subject (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; Wood, Kallgren, & Priesler, 1985). Prior knowledge can, therefore, work for or against the persuasiveness of an appeal depending on the receiver's reaction to the information disseminated in the message.

Factors Impacting Persuasive Outcomes Under the Peripheral Route

When a receiver has little motivation (e.g., low issue involvement) and/or does not have the ability to process a message (e.g., distracted, lacks comprehension), their likelihood of elaborating on a persuasive appeal's information is low. Consequently, the peripheral route to information processing is engaged. This processing route leads a receiver to sidestep thoughtful deliberation about the appeal's information and favor the use of peripheral cues to assess the advocated message (Kitchen et al., 2014). Subsequently, the lower a receiver's elaboration level, the more crucial and impactful a given peripheral cue becomes in ultimately guiding the persuasive outcome. Likewise, when elaboration increases, peripheral cues become progressively less impactful to the persuasive outcome.

Peripheral cues, which are "extrinsic aspects of the communication situation," primarily function as simple acceptance or rejection parameters under low elaboration conditions (O'Keefe, 2013, p. 139). This acceptance or rejection of the persuasive appeal occurs by eliciting certain mechanisms, such as primitive affective states (e.g., punishment or reward reinforcement; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a) and/or *heuristic* principles. Heuristics are simple rules or cognitive shortcuts employed by a receiver (O'Keefe, 2013). Typically, they do not require vast cognitive

resources and are not consciously articulated. Instead, they work in the background, guiding decisions (e.g., to agree or not) regarding the advocated position (O'Keefe, 2013). Peripheral cues in the persuasive communicative setting activate these heuristics.

Under low elaboration conditions, the perceived characteristics of a message's source (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, likability) function as a particularly salient peripheral cue, guiding persuasion in the same direction as their perceived valence (O'Keefe, 2013; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). In other words, positively evaluated sources (e.g., expert sources) will be more persuasive than negatively judged sources (e.g., inexpert sources), irrespective of the information located in the message (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). For example, a source's characteristic, such as an academic honorific like 'Dr.,' can lead a receiver to infer that the source is an expert, which, in turn, activates a heuristic such as 'experts are always right.' This heuristic then leads the receiver to perceive the source more positively (e.g., more credible).

A source's accent is, by ELM definition, an extrinsic aspect of the communication situation. Therefore, as an extrinsic aspect attributed to the source, a source's accented speech is a source characteristic. Based on this understanding, a source's accent should function similarly to other source characteristics (e.g., an expert or physically attractive source) in the persuasion context: the effects of source accent should be more influential under minimal elaboration conditions when a receiver is processing a message peripherally.

Consistent with this finding, Lalwani, Lwin, and Li (2005), found that a source's accent had more effect under peripheral than central processing conditions. Specifically, the researchers investigated the factors that influenced the credibility attributions directed towards certain accented speakers acting as spokesmen for advertising campaigns. In particular, the focus was on the effect of the spokesman's accent on persuasion under varying participant involvement levels.

The participant level of involvement was manipulated only by presenting them with products of either high value (e.g., computer, car) or low value (e.g., candy bar, toothpaste) in importance. The spokesmen used to advertise the products used either a British English or a Singaporean English accent. Findings demonstrated that the relative persuasiveness of the spokesman with the British accent—which was rated more favorably than the Singaporean English accent in credibility attributions—increased when receivers were presented with lower value/involvement products.

In sum, when a receiver's motivation is low and/or they cannot elaborate extensively due to lack of ability, they are more likely to process a persuasive message peripherally. When a receiver engages in peripheral processing, source factors (e.g., source accent) function as a peripheral cues and their effects on persuasion outcomes become accentuated.

Factors Impacting Persuasive Outcomes Under the Central Route

When a receiver is *motivated* (e.g., high issue involvement) and has the *ability* to comprehend a message, their elaboration likelihood increases. As elaboration increases, the previously discussed peripheral cues and their associated heuristics have less and less impact on the persuasive outcome. This is because the central route to information processing is engaged, causing a receiver's issue-relevant thoughts towards the message to primarily drive the persuasive outcome (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). The engagement of central processing leads messages that elicit predominantly positive thoughts to be more successful. However, if the evoked thoughts are mostly negative, the persuasive outcome is less likely to be successful (O'Keefe, 2008). Two factors influence this *elaboration valence* (i.e., the potential positivity or negativity of the issue-relevant thoughts induced): the perception of the message's advocated position and the quality of the message's argument.

As discussed prior, if a receiver perceives a message's claim to be similar to their own position (i.e., pro-attitudinal), they will typically generate more favorable thoughts towards it and agree with its position. However, if the claim is counter-attitudinal, a receiver will be more likely to generate negative or counter argumentative thoughts about the advocated position and be less likely to agree. (O'Keefe, 2008). If based on this understanding alone, a receiver would very rarely, if ever, be persuaded by counter-attitudinal messages. Subsequently, prior research has demonstrated that people are also convinced by the arguments' quality in a counter-attitudinal message, with strong and cogent arguments also evoking positive thoughts (O'Keefe, 2013).

Messages intended to persuade usually contain implied or overt arguments supporting an advocated position (O'Keefe & Jackson, 1995). These embedded arguments naturally vary in their *message quality*. In high elaboration conditions, a message's argument quality takes a commanding role, with strong or high-quality arguments (e.g., logical, verifiable facts) leading to more successful persuasive outcomes than weak or low-quality arguments (e.g., illogical, specious claims) (Carpenter, 2015). Under high elaboration conditions, message quality predominantly impacts the persuasive outcome because the message's content is subjected to increased levels of scrutiny. Therefore, message arguments that are perceived as robust and with sound reasoning will lead to more positive issue relevant thoughts. In contrast, message arguments perceived as illogical or based on specious evidence will lead to more negative issue relevant thoughts (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

When a receiver is centrally processing, the information embedded in a message primarily guides the relative persuasiveness of the appeal. Subsequently, source characteristics typically tend to have little to no impact on the persuasive outcome. Findings by Morales, Scott,

and Yorkston (2012) provide evidence that a source's accent under apparent central[1] processing conditions generally follows a similar pattern as outlined by the ELM: message quality largely dictates the persuasive outcome, with a source's accent having a relatively minor impact.

A message's argument quality is essential to the success or failure of the persuasive outcome when a receiver is centrally processing. Consistent with this direction, Morales, Scott, and Yorkston (2012) conducted a four-part study examining the impact of different source accents in varying persuasive settings (evaluations towards the product, public service announcements, etc.). In their fourth study, the researchers manipulated source accent and message quality (i.e., PSA argument weak or strong) in order to examine the extent to which each impacted persuasion. Findings showed that recipients were predominantly persuaded by strong rather than weak arguments. In other words, strong arguments were still given more weight than weak arguments, regardless of the speaker's accent, presumably because participants were processing the message centrally.

At this stage, the discussed findings and the ELM predominantly suggest that a source's accent should primarily function as a peripheral cue. A source's accent should then substantially impact the persuasive outcome when a receiver's elaboration level is low. Subsequently, under these peripheral route conditions, an appeal's argument quality should have little impact in guiding decisions. In contrast, message quality has its most substantial impact on the persuasive outcome when a receiver's elaboration is high, with source accent having little impact under a receiver's central route processing. This description would be the case if a source's accent only

[1] It is not completely clear whether the respondents were processing the messages peripherally or centrally. However, participants were told to "focus attention explicitly on the persuasiveness of the advertising message" (p. 40). It is, therefore, plausible to assume that the recipients were displaying *more extensive* levels of elaboration.

functioned as a peripheral cue. While some variables like argument quality predominantly function as central cues (i.e., issue-relevant argument), source characteristics, depending on the context, have been shown to function in additional ways (Brinol & Petty, 2009).

Source Factors in the ELM

As noted previously, source factors are an extrinsic aspect of the communication situation and thus typically function as peripheral cues. However, according to the ELM, source factors can function in multiple roles based on different conditions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Under this multiple role assumption, source factors can function not only as the previously mentioned peripheral cues but also as central (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Shavitt, Swan, Lowery, & Wanke 1994) and biasing cues (e.g., Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994), or as elaboration moderators (e.g., Booth-Butterfield & Gutowski, 1993; Puckett et al., 1983). This section will initially describe how source factors generally function in each of these four roles. Each section will then briefly address how a source's accent has been shown to, or would likely, function in each of the given roles. Given the direction of the dissertation, special attention and detail will be afforded to the discussion of source factors as elaboration moderators. Specifically, this last section will focus on how source accent may function as an elaboration moderator.

Source Factors as Peripheral Cues. As noted earlier, source factors (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, and likability) can be peripheral cues. Source factors as peripheral cues typically function as simple acceptance or rejection cues, impacting the persuasive outcome when a receiver is peripherally processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). The lower a receiver's elaboration likelihood is, the greater the impact and influence a given source factor will have in guiding persuasion. The perceived persuasiveness of the message largely follows the perceived valence of the source factor characteristic (O'Keefe, 2013). For example, if a given source factor is

positively valenced (e.g., high credibility source), it typically is used as a cue to message acceptance. In contrast, a negatively valenced source factor (e.g., low credibility source) acts as a cue to message rejection.

A source's accent has also been shown to function as a peripheral cue under lower elaboration conditions (e.g., Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005). Specifically, source accent has been shown to have a stronger effect on purchase intentions under low involvement conditions, compared to high involvement conditions. In other words, source accents evaluated *favorably* (*unfavorably*) in language attitudes (e.g., status attributions) under minimal elaboration conditions typically solicit *more* (*less*) message persuasiveness.

Source Factors as Central Cues. When a receiver is engaged in extensive elaboration, they are likely to be centrally processing the message. Accordingly, the information in a message, such as the quality of its embedded arguments, primarily guides the relative persuasiveness of the appeal (O'Keefe & Jackson, 1995; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Under these elaboration conditions, source factors typically have little to no impact on the persuasive outcome. However, when source factors are perceived as substantive and issue-relevant pieces of evidence for the argument, they can function as central cues (or arguments: Brinol & Petty, 2009). In experimental conditions, a particular source factor functioning as a central cue typically only impacts the persuasive outcome under certain contexts, such as when message quality is kept constant (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). For example, a physically attractive source may increase message persuasiveness over an unattractive source when both sources send identical messages that are selling beauty products (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). In this instance, the attractiveness of the source functions as a salient piece of information regarding the quality of the beauty product, leading the source's attractiveness to impact the message's persuasiveness.

While no empirical research has explicitly explored whether a source's accent functions as a central cue, comparative research suggests it may well do so under specific conditions. For instance, group identity has been shown to enhance persuasion under central processing conditions by serving as an actual argument related to the message's topic (Mackie, Gastardo-Conaco, & Skelly, 1992; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). Since a speaker's accent acts as a salient marker for categorizing their group identity, a source's accent could also function as an issue-relevant variable in contexts where group identification is paramount to the decision-making process (cf. Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995).

Source Factors as a Biasing Cue. Another way source characteristics can function is by biasing a receiver's information processing (Brinol & Petty, 2008). In this way, the specific characteristic of the source functions by affecting the valence of the thoughts coming into the receiver's mind. Subsequently, under high elaboration conditions, if message quality is ambiguous (neither weak nor strong), the perceived expertise of a source can bias the processing of the message. For example, suppose a message's source is considered to have substantial expertise (i.e., positive valence) in the topic at hand. In that case, they will be considered more persuasive than a source perceived to have less expertise (i.e., negative valence) in the same topic, by positively biasing the valence of elicited thoughts (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994).

Since accents are associated with various relevant group stereotypes, biased processing is almost inevitable. For example, in the previously mentioned study by Morales, Scott, and Yorkston (2012), which investigated the effects of source accent and message quality on persuasion, biased processing is seemingly evident under the study's central processing conditions. As mentioned before, a message's quality was more impactful than the source's accent in ratings of message persuasiveness. However, favorable judgments of the source's

accent were also shown to have an evaluation halo effect, regardless of the message's argument quality. In other words, even though strong arguments were still given more weight than weak arguments, favorable judgments of a given source's accent still raised the relative persuasiveness of their arguments.

Source Factors as Elaboration Moderators. Variables that influence persuasion by affecting a receiver's extent of elaboration about the given persuasive communication are described as elaboration moderators (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002). Source factors have been shown to moderate elaboration by impacting a receiver's ability to engage in issue-relevant thinking about a message's arguments. Source factor variables that cause a receiver to be distracted can increase or decrease elaboration via their impact on processing *ability* (Brinol & Petty, 2009). These variables can sometimes initially function as elaboration moderators, and then act as peripheral cues if their impact as a moderator significantly reduces elaboration (Brinol & Petty, 2009).

For example, a source's rate of speech has been shown to function as an elaboration moderator and then as a peripheral cue (Smith & Shaffer, 1991). Sources who have a rate of speech that is too quick for a receiver to comprehend readily (approx. 220 wpm) can disrupt a receiver's ability to process the persuasive message carefully. Therefore, if the appeal is objectively weak in quality, this reduction in the ability to elaborate, caused by the source's fast rate of speech, can, in some contexts (e.g., moderate levels of involvement), increase the persuasive outcome's success (e.g., Smith & Shaffer, 1995). Typically, when a message's quality is poor and a receiver is centrally processing, the message's persuasiveness is severely reduced. However, if a receiver's motivation is moderate and disruptions to ability further lower their

elaboration, the message will be peripherally processed instead. Subsequently, the appeal's informational merit is not as crucial to the persuasive outcome.

Moreover, since rapid speech is often associated with higher competence and intelligence levels, it can function as a positive peripheral cue when evaluating the message. On the other hand, if an appeal is strong in quality, this reduction in the ability to elaborate reduces the success of persuasion (Smith & Shaffer, 1995). In this instance, a receiver no longer fully comprehends the message's strong arguments, which, with a slightly less rapid speech rate, would lead to more favorable thought production and persuasive success. Instead, the receiver is peripherally processing and basing their message judgments on peripheral cues rather than the message's informational merits. While the above may still lead to persuasive success if the rate of speech is associated with favorable heuristics, the overall perceived strength, temporal persistence, and predictability of subsequent behavior will likely remain lower than if the claim was centrally processed (O'Keefe, 2013).

Recent additions to persuasion literature suggest that the impact of source effects may be not only impactful at the direct level of cognition discussed above, but also at second-order cognition—or metacognition (Brinol & Petty, 2009; Petty et al., 2002). A person's primary thought involves the initial association of an object with an attribute or feeling (e.g., this message is hard to understand) (Brinol & Petty, 2009). After this primary level of cognition, individuals can also generate second level thoughts, or thoughts about thought processes (e.g., am I sure the message is hard to understand?). This *metacognitive* experience not only applies to the information's content, but also to the metacognitive experience of processing information (e.g., this message is frustrating) (Schwarz, 1990).

As previously mentioned, a person's metacognitive experience varies on a continuum from highly effortless (fluent) to highly effortful (disfluent) (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Schwarz, 2015). As such, an individual's *processing fluency* is not directly a form of information processing, but rather a subdivision of cognition, which accompanies the *feeling* of effort associated with a given cognitive operation (Oppenheimer, 2009). Consequently, disruptions or distractions (e.g., external noise or language complexity) to the processing of information—in this case, evaluating the merits of a persuasive appeal—have also been shown to not only impact primary thoughts but also impact an individuals' secondary thoughts (i.e., via the metacognitive experience of processing fluency). Wherever a particular task falls on the continuum, its interpretation will lead to different judgment outcomes as processing fluency is largely contextual. Naïve theories (i.e., the various learned or acquired assumptions), as previously mentioned, largely govern the basis for the interpretation and the associated affect influences the experience of the informational processing (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009).

In most contexts, when a receiver is exposed to a task or information, if it *feels* easy to process (i.e., fluent processing), several positive associations are activated (for an exception, see Galak & Nelson, 2011). For instance, fluent processing has been shown to elicit positive elevations of credibility, intelligence (Oppenheimer, 2006, 2009), and liking (e.g., Reber, Winkielman, & Schwarz, 1998). However, just as disruptions or complex language impacts primary informational processing, the subsequent *metacognitive* experience of processing fluency can also be impacted by disruption, leading to disfluency. In this case, the ability to easily discern message content diminishes, and thus, due to the increased effort and time to process, negative associations and counter-attitudinal judgments are triggered (Winkielman et al., 2003). Within the persuasive context, disruptions to people's ability to fluently process

information (e.g., the use of jargon, or complex language etc.) have been demonstrated to reduce message acceptance (e.g., Bullock, Colón Amill, Shulman, & Shulman, 2019) and reduce topic interest and efficacy (e.g., Shulman & Sweitzer, 2018).

The phonological similarity between a listener and speaker's linguistic style (i.e., perceived *accent strength*) has been shown to impact processing fluency. Since variables that reduce the processing fluency of a persuasive message can also reduce elaboration and impact the persuasive outcome, it is possible that a source's accent functions similarly under select contexts. Specifically, and mentioned previously in this chapter's section on language attitudes, accented speakers deemed as unfamiliar or dissimilar to a listener's own are often considered to have strong or heavy accents and their speech is thus perceived as being more difficult to process than more familiar or similar accented speech (Cristia et al., 2012). For example, non-Anglo foreign accented speakers have been shown to disrupt US listeners' processing fluency to a much higher degree than native speakers, typically also resulting in comparatively less favorable status and solidarity judgments (Cristia et al., 2012; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2019).

Accordingly, if extensive difficulties in processing fluency function similarly to disruptions caused by speech rate (e.g., Moore, et al., 1986; Smith & Shaffer, 1991) or other variables that considerably distract (e.g., Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976) or impair (e.g., Hafer, Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996) elaboration ability, a source's non-Anglo foreign accent may function in multiple roles in what would initially be high elaboration contexts. For instance, a speaker's foreign accent might first act as an elaboration moderator, by reducing the receiver's ability to elaborate due to the increased effort required to process the person's speech. Subsequently, this decrease in elaboration leads a receiver to likely process information peripherally instead of centrally, increasing the importance and impact of peripheral cues on their

message judgments over the message's quality. These judgments would then be centered on their fluency-based and/or linguistic categorization and stereotyping evaluations, rather than the message's informational merits. Since these attributions are typically negative for non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers, most non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers will be persuasively downgraded compared to native-accented speakers.

Based on this understanding, it seems that a non-Anglo foreign-accented source could still, in at least two contexts, lead to relatively positive persuasive outcomes relative to a native-accented source. First, referring back to what was previously discussed, if a receiver is motivated, disruptions to a receiver's ability to elaborate are not always sufficiently distracting enough to divert information processing to the peripheral route (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). In fact, a curvilinear relationship can occur, in which messages with strong arguments and no disruptions present can become slightly more persuasive if minor external disruptions do occur. Accordingly, in this context, if a non-Anglo foreign-accented source disrupts receiver processing to what is equivalent to only minor levels of distraction and a native-accented speaker causes none, the foreign-accented source could, in comparison, end up being considered slightly more persuasive. Second, a non-Anglo foreign-accented source could also improve the persuasiveness of weak message arguments if it considerably disrupts a receiver's ability to elaborate. For example, the decrease in the receiver's elaboration could reduce the negative impact and influence of the appeal's weak arguments. Subsequently, under the right conditions, a non-Anglo foreign-accented source's weak claims could lead to more successful persuasive outcomes than a native-accented source's weak claims, as the latter has a higher likelihood of being centrally processed.

The above description suggests that a non-Anglo foreign-accented source could, in some contexts, potentially promote more favorable persuasive outcomes than a native-accented source. Despite this, these two outcomes are unlikely to occur for two main reasons. Firstly, while minor disruptions can increase receiver elaboration, this outcome typically only occurs when the cause of the disruption is perceived to be external (e.g., background noise). In instances where the disruption is instead perceived to originate from the source, receiver elaboration typically decreases (Baron et al., 1973; Woodall & Burgoon, 1981). The reduction rather than promotion in elaboration occurs because a receiver's attention is redirected from the message's information towards the cause of the disruption. This redirection of attention toward the source reduces the impact of the message's informational quality—its strong arguments—as the determinant of persuasion. Additionally, source credibility evaluations are also typically negatively impacted (Baron & Miller, 1973; Woodall & Burgoon, 1981). Based on this understanding, a non-Anglo foreign-accented source that causes the equivalent of minor disruptions will not increase elaboration but, instead, once again, reduce it. This result is likely to occur because the minor disruption would be perceived as the "fault" of the source (e.g., the difficulty to process their accented speech). Subsequently, this decrease in elaboration increases the probability that a receiver processes information peripherally instead of centrally, increasing the importance and impact of peripheral cues on their message judgments over the message's quality (i.e., its strong arguments).

Secondly, it was suggested that a non-Anglo foreign-accented source that considerably disrupts a receiver's ability to elaborate may benefit in situations where their argument quality is weak. The relative increase in persuasiveness gained by lowering receiver elaboration of weak arguments is also unlikely to occur. Under these low elaboration conditions, the persuasive

outcome typically hinges on the perceived valence of the salient peripheral cues. As previously stated, non-Anglo foreign-accented are often denigrated in status and solidarity traits with disfluent experiences also leading to speaker denigration in terms of status-based attributions (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017). Subsequently, a non-Anglo foreign-accented source that reduces a receiver's elaboration of their weak arguments is still unlikely to be considered more persuasive than a native-accented source, as peripheral cues will likely still be perceived unfavorably.

In sum, source factors can function in multiple roles, impacting the persuasive outcome when a receiver is engaged in both minimal or extensive levels of elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Notably, source factors can function as elaboration moderators, impacting high-issue-involvement settings where the argument quality of a message would typically guide a receiver through central processing. In these situations, source factors tend to function as elaboration moderators when they extensively inhibit a receiver's ability to receive or comprehend a message's argument. Foreign, non-Anglo accented speakers typically disrupt a listener's processing fluency more than native-accented speech. Consequently, it is possible that, in a persuasive context, non-Anglo accented speech may also function as an elaboration moderator. Specifically, the increased effort required to process the accented source's message arguments may reduce a receiver's elaboration enough to engage only in peripheral processing. Based on the discussion above, the next section presents a proposed study to explore how a source accent may function as an elaboration moderator by examining the relative influence of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under low and high issue involvement conditions.

The Present Study

This dissertation examines the relative influence of source accent (i.e., General American English vs. Vietnamese English accent) and message quality (i.e., strong vs. weak argument) on persuasion under low and high issue involvement conditions. The Vietnamese English (hereafter VE) accent was chosen as the foreign variety for four main reasons. First, after English and Spanish, the next most-spoken language in several US States, such as Georgia, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, and Nebraska, is Vietnamese (Wills, 2021). Subsequently, VE-accented speakers, especially in these States, are likely to frequently interact with native English speakers in various persuasive communicative contexts. Second, relative to native *General American English*[2] (hereafter GAE) accented speakers and regardless of their actual citizenship status, VE-accented speakers have been shown in past research to be reliably identifiable (based just on their accent) as outgroup members (i.e., foreigners; Dragojevic & Goately-Soan, 2020). Third, American listeners have been shown to experience more difficulty processing VE-accented speech than native GAE-accented speech (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan). Fourth, American listeners have been shown to evaluate VE-accented speakers less favorably on both status and solidarity traits, compared to native GAE-accented speakers (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan).

Based on the preceding rationale for speaker choice, past research suggests two distinct, but parallel processes underlie the general effects of a given accent on a listener's language attitudes. First, accents may act as a cue to social categorization. These cues lead to the activation of different associated stereotypes and, in turn, different evaluations. Second, a

[2] *General American English* (GAE) is used in this dissertation as a reference term for native US American-accented speakers whose speech is typically not marked by regional (i.e., north-eastern or southern) characteristics (Trudgill & Hannah, 2017). Comparable speaker terms include North American English (e.g., Trudgill & Hannah), Standard North American (e.g., Bayard et al., 2001), and Standard American English (e.g., Stewart, Ryan, & Giles, 1985).

listener's processing fluency may vary for different accents, as speech produced in some accents may be harder to process than speech produced in others. The evaluation of this processing experience then acts as a metacognitive cue to a listener's language attitudes. Consistent with this rationale, the general disposition of negative language attitudes directed towards VE-accented speakers relative to native GAE-accented speakers should be a function of social categorization (e.g., foreigner) and associated negative stereotypes and the increased difficulty listeners experience processing foreign-accented speech.

Specifically, VE is a foreign, non-Anglo accent. Americans frequently associate foreign accents with a foreign (i.e., not American) identity. Consequently, a VE-accented speaker is less likely to be categorized as American than a native GAE-accented source. Moreover, VE is more dissimilar from US listeners' own speech than native GAE speech, so it is expected to disrupt fluency more. Lastly, negative stereotypes toward most foreigners, along with reduced fluency, are likely to produce less favorable status and solidarity ratings for VE-accented sources relative to native GAE-accented sources. Based on this, the following initial predictions are proposed:

H1: A VE-accented source will be less likely categorized as American than a native GAE-accented source.

H2: A VE-accented source will reduce listeners' processing fluency more than a native GAE-accented source.

$H3_{a\text{-}b}$: A VE-accented source will be attributed (a) lower status and (b) lower solidarity than a native GAE-accented source.

As noted earlier, the ELM's dual-process model presents a robust theoretical framework for examining how a source's accent is processed, functions, and ultimately impacts persuasion. Specifically, the ELM suggests that source factors typically function as peripheral cues (Petty &

Cacioppo, 1986b). When a source factor functions as a peripheral cue, it primarily acts as a simple acceptance or rejection cue. In this way, a source factor guides persuasion in the same direction as the perceived valence of the cue; positive valenced cues lead to more favorable persuasive outcomes than negatively valenced cues. In line with this, past research has shown that non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers, such as VE-accented speakers, are typically perceived as less persuasive than their native GAE-accented counterparts (DeSheilds, Kara, & Kaynak, 1996). The explanation for this finding follows the interpretation offered by the ELM: Non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers are frequently judged lower in *status* and *solidarity* traits (e.g., negative valence) than native GAE-accented speakers, who are rated more favorably in the same traits (e.g., positive valence).

However, the effects of source factors, such as a source's accent, on persuasion are also contingent on other message variables (i.e., argument quality) and certain receiver conditions (i.e., level of issue-involvement). Prior literature has shown that source factors (i.e., a source's accent) that function as peripheral cues tend to have the most extensive influence on persuasion when a receiver's issue involvement is low (Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). When a receiver has low issue involvement, their motivation to engage in extensive elaboration is typically also low. The lower their elaboration becomes, the more likely they are to process message information peripherally. Under peripheral processing conditions, the strength of the message's argument (i.e., strong or weak message quality) typically has little effect on a receiver's evaluation of message persuasiveness.

Based on this rationale, when a message is processed peripherally, source accent should primarily function as a peripheral cue. Since peripherally processing receivers are not primarily focused on message content, judgments should largely be based on the valence of source accent

evaluations rather than argument quality. Subsequently, a negatively evaluated source (i.e., VE-accented speaker) should be considered less persuasive than a positively evaluated source (e.g., native GAE-accented speaker), irrespective of argument quality. It is therefore proposed that:

H4: Under low issue involvement conditions, a VE-accented source will be less persuasive than a native GAE-accented source, regardless of argument quality.

In contrast to low involvement conditions, when a receiver has high issue involvement, their likelihood of engaging in extensive elaboration increases. This increase in elaboration also increases the likelihood that the receiver processes a message's information centrally. When receivers centrally process a message, the quality of the message's embedded arguments primarily guides its relative persuasiveness. Under these conditions, source factors (e.g., source accent) that function primarily as peripheral cues tend to have little to no impact on the persuasive outcome; strong arguments should be more persuasive than weak arguments, regardless of the persuasive message's source accent. Under high involvement conditions, this outcome description of source accent and argument quality assumes that source accent strictly functions as a peripheral cue. However, in certain contexts, source factors have been shown to not strictly function as peripheral cues but also function in multiple other roles. Recent findings in language attitudes (e.g., Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017) and persuasion (e.g., Bullock et al., 2019) provide the foundation for the argument that a source's accent may function in multiple roles. Specifically, it may function as an elaboration moderator[3] by disrupting receivers' ability to process message information fluently.

[3] Given this study's specific manipulated conditions (i.e., message quality and involvement), source accent is unlikely to function in this context as either a central or bias cue. Source characteristics typically only function as central or biasing cues with significant impact on the persuasive outcome when message quality is ambiguous or when they are pertinent to the claim's issue (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

Factors that distract or disrupt a receiver's ability to process a message fluently have been shown to function as elaboration moderators and affect a message quality's impact on persuasion (Bullock et al., 2019; Shulman & Sweitzer, 2018). Similar to other source factors (e.g., speech rate; Smith & Shaffer, 1995), foreign non-Anglo accented speech that is considered more effortful or difficult to process than native speech (Cristia et al., 2012) can disrupt listeners' processing fluency (e.g., Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Specifically, VE-accented speech disrupts listeners' processing fluency to a higher degree than native GAE-accented speech (Dragojevic-& Goatley-Soan, 2020). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that disruptions to processing fluency due to a VE-source's accent may negatively impact a receiver's ability to engage in extensive elaboration, irrespective of their level of issue involvement. If this is indeed the case, the outcome description of source accent and argument quality needs to be qualified under high involvement conditions.

Specifically, when a receiver has high issue involvement, they are likely to engage in extensive elaboration and centrally process information, provided their ability to do so is not severely disrupted. Since native GAE-accented speech is relatively easy to process, it is unlikely to considerably disrupt receivers' processing ability and thus is still likely to function primarily as a peripheral cue. Consequently, if a message is delivered by a GAE-accented source, strong arguments should be more persuasive than weak arguments. In contrast, if a source has a VE accent, the conditions necessary for central processing are unlikely to be satisfied. Notably, the increased effort required to process a VE-accented source's speech may disrupt a receiver's ability to elaborate, increasing the probability that they will engage in peripheral processing. In this situation, a source's VE accent functions initially as an elaboration moderator by reducing receiver elaboration and then as a peripheral cue. Consequently, under these low elaboration

conditions, the importance of message quality is once again reduced, with the persuasive outcome primarily guided by the valence of source accent evaluations. Since a VE-accented source is likely to be a negatively evaluated source, this dissertation's final hypothesis proposes that:

H5: Under high issue involvement conditions, *strong* arguments will be more persuasive than *weak* arguments, but only for the native GAE-accented source.

Collectively, this dissertation contributes to the empirical literature by examining the relative influence of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under various elaboration conditions (high and low issue involvement levels). Specifically, the present study extends research in a domain of seeming literary dearth and addresses the call for "researchers in language and persuasion to conduct more theoretically grounded research" (Hosman, 2002, p. 383). This chapter presented the ELM as a framework that provides a theoretically grounded rationale for some of the seemingly inconsistent past research findings. Moreover, it also provides a clear theoretical vehicle for investigating the various hypotheses presented at the end of the chapter which seek to clarify the relative influence of source accent and argument quality on persuasion under various elaboration conditions. The next chapter, Chapter Three, provides a detailed overview of the methods used to test this dissertation's five primary hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

This chapter starts by discussing the main experiment, then proceeds to outline its procedure and respondents, and measurement instruments. Results from three pretests will also be discussed throughout the section as their findings help verify the measures, manipulations, and stimuli used for the main experiment.

Main Experiment

Design

The five main hypotheses were investigated using an online experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions, defined by a 2 (source accent: GAE or VE accent) x 2 (argument quality: weak or strong) x 2 (involvement: low or high) factorial design.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through SONA for moderate reward (e.g., class credit), after which they then took an online survey containing the experimental study. Following prior studies (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981) participants were presented with a contextual scenario.

The contextual scenario was that the University of Kentucky is currently undergoing an academic re-evaluation and that the university President is seeking recommendations about policy changes to be instituted. In order to obtain a variety of opinions about the university and its future, participants were told that the university President had asked several individuals and groups to prepare policy statements. The participants were then further told that the policy statement that they were about to listen to had been recorded for possible distribution and that the College of Communication and Information was cooperating with the university administration in having the recorded statement rated for its broadcast quality. After reading the contextual scenario, participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight possible conditions.

First, each participant was assigned to one of two possible personal involvement conditions: high or low involvement. Depending on their randomly assigned placement, a participant received one of two possible statements that extended upon the original contextual scenario (see Appendix C). Participants assigned to the high personal involvement condition were told that UK's President is seeking recommendations about policy changes to be implemented the following year (Spring, 2023), meaning that they, personally would be directly affected by the policy. Participants assigned to the low personal involvement condition were told that UK's President is seeking recommendations about changes that will only take effect in 10 years time (i.e., Spring of 2033), meaning that they, personally, would not be directly affected by the policy. Consequently, following prior research (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), issue involvement was manipulated solely by a change in the advocated date for implementation. After reading their presented involvement scenario statements, participants were then immediately asked to indicate how important this issue was to them.

Second, after completing the involvement scale, participants listened to an audio recording of a speaker advocating that seniors be required to pass comprehensive exams before graduation. The message contained either strong or weak arguments and was delivered either in a GAE or VE accent.

After listening to the recording, participants were first asked to respond to measures assessing message persuasiveness. Following this, they were asked to evaluate the message content (i.e., strength/quality) and the speaker (i.e.., status, solidarity). After completing these items, they were then asked to answer standard demographic questions. Lastly, participants were debriefed and told that the issue presented in the opening statement—the implementation of the

comprehensive exams— was not actually being implemented next year or in the foreseeable future at the University.

Participants

Volunteer student participants (n = 655) were recruited from the University of Kentucky via an online system (CI SONA) provided by the College of Communication and Information in exchange for course credit. Participants who indicated that they were not US citizens (n = 34), intended to graduate before the Spring of 2023 (n = 115), participated in a similar study in the past (n = 211), and did not provide permission to use their data (n = 20) were excluded, leaving a total 347 participants for the subsequent analysis. The remaining participants were majoritively female (57.3%), ranging in age from 18 to 42 years old (M = 19.3, SD = 2.5) and reported their ethnicity as White (85%), African-American (10.7%), Asian/Asian-American (4.9%), Hispanic (4.3%), Native American (1.2%), and Other (1.4). Students were freshmen (59.7%), sophomores (19.9%), juniors (18.7%), seniors (1.4%), and unsure (0.3%).

Based on the study's research objectives, an a priori power analysis was conducted prior to data collection to evaluate the minimum sample required to detect a small-to-medium effect (f = .15) with a power of .80 and an alpha of 0.05. The power analysis suggested that a total sample size of 351 participants was required (Calculated using G*Power 3.1.9, a free-to-use software used to calculate statistical power). After excluding participants who failed to meet inclusion criteria (see above), the final sample (N = 347) was slightly under the sample size necessary for sufficient power to detect small-to-medium effects.

Stimuli

Involvement Manipulation. Before message exposure, each participant was provided with one of two scenario statements. Participants assigned to the high involvement condition

were told that UK's recommendations about policy changes would be instigated the following year (Spring, 2023), meaning that they themselves would have to take the exam and pass it in order to graduate. In contrast, participants assigned to the low condition were told that the proposed changes would only take effect in 10 years time in the Spring of 2033 (low involvement), meaning that they themselves would *not* have to take the exam or pass it in order to graduate. Similar manipulations have been used extensively in past research (e.g., Petty, & Cacioppo, 1984). See Appendix C for the proposed implemented manipulation statements.

Pretest ratings of the high and low conditions were shown to be successful in their manipulation of participant issue involvement. Specifically, using a sample of undergraduate students (n = 130), participants in the high involvement condition (M = 5.31) reported the issue as more personally relevant than participants in the low involvement condition (M = 3.71), $t(128)$= -4.754, $p < .001$, d= -0.83. One-tailed single sample t-tests further demonstrated that the high involvement condition, $t(62)$ = 5.02, $p < .001$, d= .63, was significantly higher from scale midpoint (i.e., 4), whereas the low involvement condition was marginally lower than the scale midpoint, $t(64)$ = -1.35, $p < .091$, d= -.17.

Argument Quality Manipulation. All participants received one of two appeals (weak or strong) in audio format. Each of the messages utilized an appeal advocating that seniors be required to pass a comprehensive exam in their declared major before graduation. Overall, the strong version of the appeal provided evidence (e.g., relevant data) supporting the argument. In contrast, the weak version relied more on quotations and opinions than statistics and data to support its argument.

The chosen stimuli messages were picked from a pool of statements acquired from past literature (see Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The arguments were pretested out of 5 possible

contextual messages comprising both strong and weak versions (total 10 messages). In order to verify their relative strength, weakness, and comprehensibility, two pretests were conducted.

An initial pretest on a sample of undergraduate students (n = 258) sought to identify the most suitable argument stimulus out of 5 possible contextual messages (See Appendix B for all messages). Except for message 2 (p = .974), analyses of the manipulation of message quality were demonstrated to be effective for all messages in the first pretest. Findings revealed that Message 1's mean scores for the strong messages (M = 4.72) were significantly different from weak messages (M = 3.60), $t(221)$= -5.413, p < .001, d= -0.73. Message 3's mean scores for the strong messages (M = 4.34) were significantly different from the weak messages (M = 3.91), $t(222)$= -2.16, p = .032, d = -0.29. Message 4's mean scores for the strong messages (M = 4.51) were significantly different from the weak messages (M = 3.9), $t(222)$= -3.189, p = .002, d= -0.43. Message 5's mean scores for the strong messages (M = 5.11) were significantly different from the weak messages (M = 3.55), $t(222)$= -8.318, p < .001, d= -1.54. Overall, based on the largest mean differences and strongest effect sizes, the message most suitable to be used as message stimulus was identified as Message 5.

A second pretest built on the initial pretest's findings by updating its issue involvement statement. Due to this change, a second pretest on a sample of undergraduate students (n = 130) sought to re-confirm that the choice of Message 5 was still a robust argument stimulus. Subsequently, only two contextual message contexts were used for the second pretest (i.e., Messages 1 and 5; Appendix B). Pretest 2's findings demonstrate that Message 1's mean scores for the strong message (M = 4.57) were significantly different from the weak message (M = 3.32), $t(127)$= -5.033, p < .001, d= -0.89. Notably, Message 5's mean scores for the strong message version (M = 4.82) were still significantly different from its weak message version (M =

2.92), $t(127) = -7.508$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.32$, displaying larger mean differences and stronger effect sizes, than Message 1. Additionally, follow-up one-tailed single sample t-tests also demonstrate that message 5's mean scores for its strong, $t(63) = 4.91$, $p < .001$, $d = .61$ and weak, $t(63) = -5.86$, $p < .001$, $d = -.73$, messages were both different from their scale's mid-point (i.e., 4). Lastly, comparisons of message quality (i.e., Strong vs. Weak) for Message 5 did not display significant differences in *message comprehensibility*, $t(127) = -.16$, $p = .087$, $d = -.30$. In other words, differences in message quality were based on the arguments within them and not based on the message's structural complexity.

Source Accent Manipulation. The message's audio stimuli were created using the *matched-guise technique* (MGT: Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960). This method involves using recordings (known as *guises)* from a single bidialectal speaker to produce all the accented recordings. Variations on the MGT sometimes utilize multiple speakers to create the stimuli recordings. While the use of multiple speakers can be considered a more natural means of stimuli creation, it suffers from interspeaker variation (e.g., pitch, rhythm). This variation between recorded speakers has the potential to impact the targeted vocal manipulation (i.e., their accent) under investigation. Subsequently, this study follows the *matched-guise technique* by utilizing only a single speaker to create the accented recordings (i.e., guises) as this ensures that each recording reflects only a difference in the manipulated accent.

All message recordings were produced by a male speaker. He was in his 30s and a native Vietnamese and US English speaker. Participants were randomly assigned to listen to one of four possible accented audio stimuli produced by the bidialectal speaker. The four recordings included two recordings in a native, General American English (GAE) guise (i.e., strong and weak message appeal) and two recordings in a foreign, Vietnamese English (VE) guise (i.e.,

strong and weak message appeal). All recordings were of similar length (approx. 30s) and normalized at 70dB in post-production editing.

In order to verify that the created accented recordings (GAE and VE) were, in fact, perceived differently and consistent with the typical evaluations toward native and foreign accented speakers, a third Pretest (n = 104) using a non-contextual script was conducted. Specifically, using two-tailed independent sample t-tests, pretest 3's findings demonstrated that compared to the GAE guise, the VE guise was attributed less *status* (M_{VE} = 4.64; M_{GAE} = 5.06), $t(102) = 2.03$, $p = .045$, $d = .40$ and decreased *fluency* (M_{VE} = 3.44; M_{GAE} = 6.01), $t(102) = 10.763$, $p = <.001$, $d = 2.11$. Perceptions of fluency were also shown to be different from the scale midpoint (i.e., 4) for both the GAE guise, $t(50) = 12.51$, $p = <.001$, $d = 1.75$, and VE guise, $t(52) = -3.18$, $p = .001$, $d = -.44$. Ratings of accent *familiarity*, $t(102) = 3.28$, $p = .001$, $d = .64$, *similarity*, $t(102) = 7.503$, $p = <.001$, $d = 1.47$, and *strength*, $t(102) = -12.604$, $p < .001$, $d = -2.47$, also varied as a function of speaker guise. Specifically, pretest listeners rated the VE guise as less familiar (M_{VE} = 3.47; M_{GAE} = 4.69), less similar (M_{VE} = 1.11; M_{GAE} = 3.49), and more accented (M_{VE} = 6.23; M_{GAE} = 2.94) than the GAE guise. Contrary to pretest expectations, the VE guise was rated higher than the GAE guise in *solidarity* ratings (M_{VE} = 5.31; M_{GAE} = 4.60), $t(102) = -3.02$, $p = .003$, $d = .-0.59$.

In sum, Pretest 3 confirmed that the chosen speaker was able to authentically adopt both accented guises and that they were manipulated successfully. Findings were largely consistent with expectations and prior literature (e.g., Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020; Fuertes et al., 2012), as the VE guise was downgraded on most measures relative to the GAE guise. While solidarity ratings were inconsistent with expectations, the relative increase in solidarity traits of a given accent is neither unique nor problematic to the success of the manipulation. Sometimes,

certain native (e.g., Dragojevic, Savage, Scott & McGinnis, 2018; Marlow & Giles, 2008) and non-native accented speakers (e.g., Linderman, 2003) who are typically stigmatized may be upgraded or evaluated equally in solidarity traits when compared to native US accented speakers (Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982).

Measures

After listening to the recording, participants completed the dependent measures and several manipulation checks, before being presented with standard demographic questions at the end (see Appendix E for all proposed scales). Accordingly, this section introduces the dependent measures assessing the central constructs of the experiment: *source accent evaluation* (i.e., status, solidarity, fluency) and *message persuasiveness* (i.e., attitude toward the issue, message agreement); and lastly provide *manipulation checks* (i.e., message quality and issue involvement). See Appendix D for all proposed measurement scales.

Message Persuasiveness. Immediately after listening to the recording, participants were asked to respond to measures targeting message persuasiveness. Message persuasiveness was operationalized as participants' attitude toward the issue (i.e., comprehensive exams) and their level of agreement with the message (i.e., to institute a comprehensive exam requirement for seniors).

Attitude Toward the Issue. Evaluations toward comprehensive exams were measured using a measure of general attitudes, which has yielded reliable results (Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$) in past research (e.g., Ivanov et al., 2017). The measure includes seven semantic differential items on a 7-point scale: *bad/good, negative/positive, unfavorable/favorable, wrong/right, unacceptable/acceptable, undesirable/desirable,* and *like/dislike.* The scale yielded reliable results across pretest 1 ($\alpha = .95$) pretest 2 ($\alpha = .94$), and the main experiment ($\alpha = .94$).

Message Agreement. Agreement with the message was measured by having participants indicate the extent to which they agree with the proposal using a 7-point scale (1= do not agree, 7 = completely agree). This measure was adopted from past literature investigating similar persuasive message claims (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Heesacker, 1981).

Source Accent Evaluation. After completing the message persuasiveness measures, perceptions of the source's accent were assessed using traditional and adapted measures frequently used in language attitudes literature (see Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017; Zahn & Hopper, 1985). Accordingly, participants rated the speaker's *status* and *solidarity* by responding (1 = not at all; 7 = very) to five status (i.e., intelligent, educated, competent, smart, and successful) and five solidarity (i.e., friendly, nice, pleasant, sociable, and warm) trait items. The five status items and the five solidarity items were averaged to form the status and solidarity composites, respectively. Following prior literature (e.g., Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017; αs ranging from .90 to 94), pretesting yielded reliable results from both the status (α = .94) and solidarity composites (α = .94) composites. Similarly, both instruments in the main experiment were shown to be reliable: status (α = .95) and solidarity (α = .95).

Next, and following similar surveys (e.g., Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017), participants indicated how *similar* the speaker's accent was to their own accent (1 = not at all similar; 7 = very similar), and how *strong, familiar, and foreign* the speaker's accent sounded (1 = not at all; 7 = very). These four items were collapsed and averaged to form the *accent foreignness* scale (α = .86).

To measure perceived fluency, participants then indicated on scales used in past research (e.g., Dragojevic, 2019; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016) how *clear*, *effortful*, *comprehensible*, and *easy to understand* the speaker was (1 = not at all; 7 = very). These four items were collapsed

and averaged to form the *processing fluency* scale. Following preceding literature (e.g., Dragojevic et al., 2017; α = .92) and pretesting (α = .92), the processing fluency scale in the main experiment was found to be highly reliable (α = .96).

Next, participants indicated their *sense of connection* with the speaker on a modified version of the Inclusion of the Other in the Self scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). The scale required respondents to choose one of seven images that represents a varying sense of connection with the speaker. Each of the seven images depicts a pair of rings that diverge in their amount of overlap (no overlap to complete overlap). Participants then rated their affective responses on a feeling thermometer (1-100) measuring what their *feelings were toward* the speaker. Lastly, categorization was assessed by asking participants to indicate whether they thought the speaker was "American" or "foreign".

Supplemental Measures. Participants indicated their level of *motivation, ability, depth,* and *bias* during message processing by responding (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) to the 16-item Message Processing Quality Scale (MPQS; Wolski, & Nabi, 2000). Items comprising each of the four subscales were averaged to form reliable scales: motivation (α = .81), ability (α = .83), depth (α = .86), and bias (α = .72).

Manipulation Checks. Several measures were included to ensure that message quality and involvement were manipulated successfully.

Message Strength. To ensure that each version (i.e., strong and weak) of the recorded message differed in the strength of its argument, message strength was assessed with a three-item Likert scale adapted from past research (e.g., Park et al., 2007; α =. 83). Measure adaption involved changing the word '*message'* to '*statement*' to fit the context of the study. Accordingly, the measure asked respondents on a 7-point scale (1= not at all 7= very much), whether *the*

statement made a strong argument for implementing comprehensive exams, the statement made a convincing case for implementing comprehensive exams, the statement made a weak argument for implementing comprehensive exams. The slightly reworded measure was found to be highly reliable in pretesting (α = .82) and the main experiment (α = .90).

Involvement. Participants' level of involvement in message processing was operationalized as their level of *issue relevance* with the experiment's context—the requirement to take a senior comprehensive exam for graduation. Past literature measuring involvement has utilized multi-item assessment measures adapted from Zaichkowsky's (1985) scale personal inventory scale (e.g., Ivanov et al., 2017). However, research similar to this study's context (i.e., implementing comprehensive exams), which specifically manipulates participant involvement (i.e., Leippe & Elkin, 1987), has instead used a series of several single-item measures asking, how *critical*, *relevant*, and *involving* is the issue (not at all to very). Findings for each measure from prior research (i.e., Leippe & Elkin, 1987) and pretesting (*ps* <.001) suggest that each of these items successfully predict participant involvement conditions. Therefore, to guard against respondent fatigue and measurement redundancy, an adapted single-item measure of issue relevance was created. The adapted single-item measure asked participants to indicate *how important this issue is to them* on a 7-point scale (1= not at all 7= very much).

Pretesting of this single-item measure indicated that it successfully predicted participant involvement conditions (see stimuli section above) and correlated positively (*ps* < .001) with each of its three single-item origin measures (i.e., critical, relevant, and involving). Subsequently, the adapted single-item measure of issue relevance demonstrated convergent and predictive validity aspects.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

All dependent measures assessing manipulation efficacy were individually submitted to a 2 (source accent: VE or GAE) × 2 (involvement: low or high) × 2 (argument quality: weak or strong) ANOVA, with post hoc comparisons adjusted using the Bonferroni correction.

Message Strength

Significant main effects for argument quality, $F(1, 339) = 96.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$, and source accent $F(1, 339) = 13.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$, as well as a significant argument quality by source accent interaction, $F(1, 339) = 9.12$, $p = .003$ $\eta^2 = .03$, emerged on perceptions of message strength. All other effects were nonsignificant. Post hoc comparisons showed that strong argument quality messages were perceived to have stronger arguments than weak argument quality messages, regardless of whether the source spoke with a GAE accent ($M_{strong} = 5.10$, $SD_{strong} = 1.40$; $M_{weak} = 3.09$, $SD_{weak} = 1.54$), $F(1, 339) = 83.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .197$, or a VE accent ($M_{strong} = 4.07$, $SD_{strong} = 1.42$; $M_{weak} = 2.99$, $SD_{weak} = 1.40$), $F(1, 339) = 22.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .063$. Thus, the argument quality manipulation was successful.

Source accent also influenced perceptions of message strength, but only when the message contained strong arguments. Namely, the strong argument quality message was perceived to have stronger arguments when it was delivered in a GAE accent ($M = 5.10$) than a VE accent ($M = 4.07$), $F(1, 339) = 21.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$. In contrast, when the message contained weak arguments, perceptions of argument strength were unaffected by the source's accent ($M_{GAE} = 3.09$; $M_{VE} = 2.99$), $F(1, 339) = .210$, $p = .647$, $\eta^2 = .001$.

Issue Relevance

Only a significant main effect of involvement emerged on perceptions of issue relevance, $F(1, 339) = 87.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. As expected, participants in the high involvement condition perceived the issue as more personally relevant ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.68$) than participants in the low involvement condition ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.86$). Additionally, follow-up one-tailed single sample t-tests demonstrated that the means for the high involvement condition, $t(165) = 11.39$, $p < .001$, $d = .88$, were significantly higher than the scale midpoint (i.e., 4), whereas the means for low involvement condition were significantly lower than the scale midpoint, $t(180) = -2.24$, $p = .013$, $d = -.17$. Thus, the involvement manipulation was successful.

Source Accent

Only a significant main effect of source accent emerged on evaluations of accent foreignness, $F(1, 339) = 556.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .621$. As expected, participants perceived the VE source's accent as more foreign ($M = 5.85$, $SD = .78$) than the GAE source's accent ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.28$). Follow-up one-tailed single sample t-tests also demonstrated that the means for the GAE were significantly lower, $t(173) = -9.03$, $p < .001$, $d = -.69$, than the scale midpoint (i.e. 4), while the VE's were significantly higher, $t(172) = 31.09$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.39$. Thus, the source accent manipulation was successful.

Focal Analysis

To test this dissertation's hypotheses, the dichotomous dependent measure (i.e., speaker categorization) was submitted to a log-linear analysis, with all other continuous measures submitted to 2 (source accent: VE or GAE) × 2 (involvement: low or high) × 2 (argument quality: weak or strong) ANOVAs. All ANOVA post hoc comparisons were adjusted using the Bonferroni correction.

Categorization

H1 predicted that the VE-accented source would be less likely to be categorized as American than the GAE-accented source. To examine H1, categorization frequencies were submitted to a 2 (speaker categorization: American or foreign) × 2 (source accent: VE or GAE) × 2 (involvement: low or high) × 2 (argument quality: weak or strong) log-linear analysis. The four-way log-linear analysis produced a final model that retained the speaker categorization × accent type and speaker categorization × involvement interactions, $\chi^2(10) = 5.01$, $p = .89$. Follow-up chi-square analyses indicated that the association between speaker categorization and accent type was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 122.57$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .59$, whereas the association between speaker categorization and level of involvement was nonsignificant, $\chi^2(1) = 3.36$, $p = .067$, Cramer's $V = .10$. Consistent with expectations, the VE-accented source was less likely to be categorized as American (6.9%) than the GAE-accented source (63.8%). Indeed, based on the odds ratio, being categorized as American was 23.64 times higher for the GAE-accented source than for the VE-accented source. Consequently, H1 was supported.

Fluency

H2 predicted that the VE-accented source will reduce listeners' processing fluency, relative to the GAE-accented source. As predicted, participants' processing fluency varied as a function of source accent, $F(1, 339) = 353.353$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .510$. Additionally, a significant interaction of source accent and message quality emerged, $F(1, 339) = 7.14$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$. Consistent with H2, the VE accented source was harder to understand than the GAE accented source, regardless of whether the message contained strong quality arguments ($M_{VE} = 3.98$, $SD_{VE} = 1.59$; $M_{GAE} = 6.17$, $SD_{GAE} = .94$), $F(1, 339) = 125.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$, or weak quality arguments ($M_{VE} = 3.52$, $SD_{VE} = 1.53$; $M_{GAE} = 6.44$, $SD_{GAE} = .74$), $F(1, 339) = 239.06$, $p < .001$,

η_p^2 = .414. Additional post hoc comparisons showed that VE-accented source was harder to understand when he delivered weak quality arguments (M = 3.52) than strong quality arguments (M = 3.98), $F(1, 339) = 5.78$, p = .017, η_p^2 = .017, whereas the GAE-accented source was equally easy to understand regardless of the argument strength (M_{weak} = 6.44; M_{strong} = 6.17), $F(1, 339)$ = 1.87, p = .172, η_p^2 = .005.

Status

H3a predicted that the VE-accented source will be attributed less status than the GAE-accented source. The main effect of source accent on status attributions, $F(1, 339) = .63$, p = .427, η_p^2 = .002, as well as other effects for involvement (p = .964) and argument quality (p = .458) were nonsignificant. Contrary to H3a, the VE- (M = 4.94, SD = 1.34) and GAE-accented source (M = 5.04, SD = 1.14) were attributed equal status.

Solidarity

H3b predicted that the VE-accented source will be attributed less solidarity than the GAE-accented source. The main effect of source accent on solidarity attributions was nonsignificant, $F(1, 339) = .04$, p = .841, η_p^2 = .000. Contrary to H3b, the VE- (M = 4.54, SD = 1.44) and GAE-accented source (M = 4.50, SD = 1.49) were attributed equal status. All interactions involving source accent were nonsignificant.

However, there was a significant main effect of argument quality on solidarity attributions, $F(1, 339) = 7.55$, p = .006, η_p^2 = .022. Sources who delivered messages containing weak arguments were attributed more solidarity (M = 4.73, SD = 1.38) than sources who delivered messages containing strong quality arguments (M = 4.30, SD = 1.48). The effects for involvement were all nonsignificant (p = .411).

Message Persuasiveness

H4 predicted that—under low issue involvement conditions—the VE-accented source will be less persuasive than the GAE-accented source, regardless of message quality. H5 predicted that—under high issue involvement conditions—strong quality arguments will be more persuasive than weak quality arguments, but only if they are delivered by the GAE-accented source. Together, these hypotheses correspond to a three-way interaction. This dissertation employed two measures of persuasiveness: (a) attitudes toward comprehensive exams and (b) agreement with the policy to institute comprehensive exams. The expected three-way interaction did not emerge for attitudes toward comprehensive exams, $F(1, 339) = .82$, $p = .367$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, nor agreement with the policy, $F(1, 339) = .34$, $p = .561$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. Thus, neither H4 nor H5 were supported.

There were, however, several significant effects. For attitudes toward comprehensive exams, there were significant main effects for involvement, $F(1, 339) = 5.29$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$, argument quality, $F(1, 339) = 16.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .046$, and source accent, $F(1, 339) = 10.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$. No interactions were significant. Attitudes towards comprehensive exams were more favorable: 1) under low involvement ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.40$) than high involvement conditions ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.43$), 2) when the message contained strong ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.42$) rather than weak arguments ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.36$), and 3) when the source spoke with a GAE accent ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.43$) rather than VE accent ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.39$).

For agreement with the policy, an identical pattern emerged, with significant main effects for involvement, $F(1, 339) = 6.37$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$, argument quality, $F(1, 339) = 21.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .058$, and source accent, $F(1, 339) = 7.60$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$, and no significant interactions (ps > .479). Support for instituting comprehensive exams was higher under low ($M =$

3.44, *SD* = 1.61) than high involvement conditions (*M* = 3.01, *SD* = 1.62), when the message contained strong (*M* = 3.65, *SD* = 1.63) rather than weak arguments (*M* = 2.84, *SD* = 1.52), and when the source spoke with a GAE accent (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.67) rather than a VE accent (*M* = 3.01, *SD* = 1.55).

Supplemental Analysis

Motivation

There was a significant main effect of involvement on motivation to elaborate, $F(1, 339) = 6.39$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$, such that participants in the high involvement condition reported higher motivation to elaborate (*M* = 4.60, *SD* = 1.29) than participants in the low involvement condition (*M* = 4.24, *SD* = 1.25). Additionally, there was a significant main effect of source accent, $F(1, 339) = 14.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .041$, such that participants were more motivated to elaborate when the message was delivered by the GAE-accented source (*M* = 4.67, *SD* = 1.23) than a VE-accented source (*M* = 4.14, *SD* = 1.28). All effects involving message quality were nonsignificant ($p = .178$).

Ability

Only a significant main effect of source accent on ability to elaborate emerged, $F(1, 339) = 11.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .034$. Participants reported lower ability to elaborate on the message when it was delivered by a VE-accented source (*M* = 3.97, *SD* = 1.51) than a GAE-accented source (*M* = 4.52, *SD* = 1.35).

Depth

Only a significant main effect of source accent on a processing depth emerged, $F(1, 339) = 16.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .048$. Participants reported less processing depth when the source spoke with a VE accent (*M* = 4.73, *SD* = 1.30) than a GAE accent (*M* = 5.26, *SD* = 1.04).

Bias

Processing bias did not vary as a function of source accent (p = .982), involvement (p = .164), or message strength (p = .530).

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This dissertation aimed to assess the impact of source accent and message quality under varying listener involvement conditions. Under a low or high involvement contextual scenario, student participants—all of whom were American nationals—listened to a recorded policy statement advocating implementing comprehensive exams for seniors before graduation. The statement contained either weak or strong arguments and was delivered either by a General American English (GAE) or Vietnamese English (VE) accented source. Findings provide clear evidence that Americans reliably distinguished between native (i.e., GAE) and non-Anglo foreign (i.e., VE) accented speech and perceived the latter as harder to understand; however, no differences between the two accents emerged on status and solidarity ratings. Concerning persuasion outcomes, the expected three-way interaction between source accent, argument quality, and level of involvement did not emerge. Instead, three main effects emerged. Specifically, the source was more persuasive when he spoke with a GAE than a VE accent; when he provided strong rather than weak quality arguments; and when the audience had low rather than high involvement. Each of the key outcomes of this study—i.e., social categorization, processing fluency, language attitudes, and persuasion—are discussed in turn.

Social Categorization

Within the US, native-accented speakers tend to be categorized as "American," whereas foreign-accented speakers tend to be categorized as "foreigners" or "not American" (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012). Based on this, H1 predicted that participants would be more likely to categorize the GAE-accented source as American than the VE-accented source. Consistent with H1, the majority of participants categorized the GAE-accented source as 'American' (63.8%) and the VE-accented source as 'foreign' (93.1%). This highly attuned and

reliable ability to distinguish between native and foreign-accented English speech is consistent with past literature (e.g., Kinzler, Shutts, & Correll, 2010) and the overall claim that accents are a potent cue to social categorization (Lippi-Green, 2012; Rakić, Steffens, & Mummendey, 2011). Moreover, this finding follows prior research by demonstrating that US participants readily associate the GAE source with a native (American) identity and the VE source with a foreign (non-American) identity (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). Consequently, the ideological association between source accent and presumed nationality, along with the ability to accurately differentiate between accents, provides the most plausible explanation for why US participants were more likely to categorize the GAE source as American and the VE source as foreign or *not American.* Stated differently, VE is a non-Anglo foreign accent, and GAE is a native US accent. Different accents are indexical of various social identities; notably, a speaker's accent is a particularly salient marker to their presumed nationality (Shuck, 2004). US participants, therefore, tended to ideologically equate VE with a foreign identity and GAE with a native identity. Consequently, source accent functioned as a salient cue to social categorization, leading participants in this study to be more likely to categorize the VE accented source as foreign and the GAE source as American.

Processing Fluency

Previous research has shown that the more a person's accent differs from one's own, the more difficulty one experiences processing that person's speech (Cristia et al., 2012; Munro & Derwing, 1995a). Consequently, speech produced in foreign accents tends to be more difficult to process than speech produced in native accents (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Based on this, H2 predicted that US participants would report lower processing fluency when listening to a VE- than a GAE-accented source. In the present study, participants rated the VE accent as stronger,

less similar to their own, and less familiar than the GAE accent. More important, and in line with H2, participants experienced more difficulty processing the VE-accented source's speech than the GAE-accented source's speech. This finding is consistent with past research showing that foreign-accented speech tends to disrupt listeners' processing fluency relative to native-accented speech (Cristia et al., 2012).

Additionally, although not predicted, source accent and message quality interacted to influence listeners' processing fluency. Although listeners experienced more difficulty understanding VE than GAE speech, *regardless* of argument quality, the VE-accented source was rated harder to understand when he delivered weak rather than strong arguments. In contrast, processing fluency for the GAE-accented source was not influenced by argument quality. This finding is important because it suggests that listeners' experience of processing fluency is influenced not only by a speaker's accent, but also by message content. Past research has shown that semantically coherent information is easier to process than incoherent information, and messages that use concrete examples can also ease the cognitive processing of information (Shulman & Sweitzer, 2020; Topolinski & Strack, 2009). Moreover, the processing fluency of accented speech is known to be impacted by external (e.g., level of background noise) and message (e.g., the inclusion of subtitles) factors (Dragojevic, 2019; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016). Based on this, one compelling explanation for this finding is that less coherent arguments seem to disrupt fluency further when fluency is already relatively low. However, when it is relatively high, lack of coherence is less likely to disrupt fluency significantly.

Language Attitudes

Past research has shown that Americans typically evaluate native US-accented English speakers more favorably than non-Anglo foreign-accented English speakers on status and

solidarity traits (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020; Fuertes et al., 2012). Two distinct processes are thought to underlie this effect: categorization/stereotyping and processing fluency (Dragojevic et al. 2017). First, accents can cue social categorization, which, in turn, activates stereotypes that promote varying social evaluations. Second, the ease or difficulty of processing a given variety of accented speech varies, with the perceived difficulty acting as a metacognitive cue to a listener's language attitudes. In short, speakers categorized as belonging to more negatively stereotyped groups and whose speech is more difficult to understand are often rated more negatively on status and solidarity traits than speakers categorized as belonging to more positive stereotyped groups and whose speech is easier to understand (Giles & Watson, 2013, Dragojevic et al. 2017). Given the expectation that participants would be more likely to categorize the VE- than the GAE-accented source as foreign—an identity associated with relatively negative stereotypes—and that they would experience more difficulty processing VE- than GAE-accented speech, H3 predicted that the VE-accented source would also be attributed less status (H3a) and solidarity (H3b) than the GAE-accented source. Contrary to H3, the GAE and VE accents were evaluated similarly on status and solidarity traits. These inconsistent findings are especially surprising given that the VE-accented source was more likely to be categorized as foreign (i.e., H1) and his speech was more difficult to process (i.e., H2), in comparison to the GAE-accented source. Several possibilities may explain this inconsistent finding.

One possibility for these null findings is that US listeners' stereotypes toward foreigners are not more negative than those toward Americans. While possible, it is unlikely; past research has repeatedly demonstrated that Americans' stereotypes toward non-Anglo foreigners are often negative (Fuertes et al., 2012; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). Moreover, these negative attitudes are

especially evident towards speakers categorized as being from stigmatized countries/regions (i.e., Vietnam/Southeast Asia; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). A second explanation is that the disruption in fluency was not significant enough, or was attributed to a cause other than the speaker. These explanations are possible as a person's processing fluency experience only influences judgments when its impact is considered consequential to the primary judgment at hand (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009). Since people usually assign an occurrence to a single cause rather than to multiple, it is possible that participants disregarded the disruptive impact of VE speech or attributed its effects to an external cause (Dragojevic, 2019; Kelley, 1973; Oppenheimer, 2006). A third possibility is that participants inferred who the speaker was based on the study's context (e.g., an educator or an administrator). Past literature has shown that contextual markers can influence speaker evaluations by acting as the salient cue for social categorization (Rubin, 1992; Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982). Subsequently, if the participants' salient cue for source evaluations was based on their contextual role (e.g., categorized as educators), VE and GAE source's associated stereotypes could be homogeneous, thereby eliciting similar evaluations.

In sum, this study's findings support the notion that native-accented speakers tend to be categorized as ingroup members (e.g., Americans) whereas non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers tend to be categorized as outgroup members (e.g., foreigners). In addition, speech produced in foreign accents—which are more different from one's own—tends to be more difficult to understand than speech produced in native accents—which are more similar to one's own. Interestingly, these findings also suggest that the extent to which foreign-accented speech disrupts listeners' processing fluency may also depend on message content. Lastly, despite

finding differences in social categorization and fluency, no differences in language attitude ratings (i.e., status, solidarity) were shown to emerge between the two accented sources.

Persuasion

The primary objective of this study was to examine if the effects of source accent and message quality on persuasion are contingent on a receiver's level of involvement. According to the ELM, under low involvement conditions, people primarily use evaluations of source characteristics (i.e., accent) to guide their assessment of a persuasive message, regardless of message argument quality. Therefore, H4 predicted that, under low issue involvement, a VE-accented source would be less persuasive than a GAE-accented source, regardless of the quality of their message arguments. Under high involvement conditions, however, the ELM suggests that a person's assessment of a persuasive message should predominantly depend on the quality of its arguments, not on their evaluations of source characteristics (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Notwithstanding this typical understanding, the ELM's multiple role hypothesis also indicates that source characteristics can, in some contexts, not only function as peripheral cues but in other, or multiple, roles (Booth-Butterfield & Welbourne, 2002). Guided by this multiple role understanding and the expectation that foreign-accented speech would disrupt listeners' processing fluency, this study posited that source accent might also function as an elaboration moderator. Consequently, H5 predicted that under high issue involvement conditions, strong arguments would be more persuasive than weak arguments, but only when the source spoke with a GAE accent. Based on this, a three-way interaction between source accent, message content, and involvement was expected.

Contrary to H4 and H5, the three-way interaction between these three variables did not emerge on either measure of persuasion (i.e., *attitudes toward* or *agreement with* a policy to

implement comprehensive exams). Instead, three main effects emerged: Participants were more persuaded when the source spoke with a GAE than a VE accent; when the message contained strong rather than weak arguments; and when they had low rather than high involvement on the issue. Each of these main effects is discussed in turn.

Effects of Source Accent

Policy messages delivered by the GAE source were more persuasive than policy messages delivered by the VE source, regardless of argument quality and listener involvement. This finding is consistent with previous research demonstrating that persuasive appeals presented by native US accented speakers tend to be more convincing than those delivered by non-Anglo foreign-accented speakers (DeSheilds, Kara, & Kaynak, 1996). The primary explanation for this finding is that these foreign-accented speakers are typically evaluated less favorably on status and/or solidarity traits than native-accented speakers and that these negative evaluations, in turn, hinder persuasion (Dragojevic et al., 2018; Morales, Scott, Yorkston, 2012). However, in the present study, the GAE and VE sources were rated equally on status and solidarity traits. Thus, the lower persuasiveness of the VE source relative to the GAE source cannot have stemmed from differences in status and/or solidarity ratings. This unexpected finding may have emerged for two reasons: VE reduced listeners' fluency and lowered perceived argument strength.

Recent research has shown that various forms of metacognition can impact persuasive outcomes (Brinol & Petty, 2009). Notably, a person's processing fluency can act as a metacognitive cue to judgments toward a message's topic, with people reporting more favorable judgments when processing feels easy rather than difficult (Bullock et al., 2019; Shulman & Bullock, 2019). The more effortful information is considered to process, the more it evokes negative feelings, reduces message credibility, and lowers message support and acceptance

(Bullock et al., 2019; Shulman, Bullock, & Riggs, 2021). In the present study, the VE source's speech reduced participants' processing fluency in comparison to the GAE source. The increased effort required to process message information in VE speech likely evoked more negative feelings and/or judgments towards their message's information (e.g., its embedded arguments are weaker) relative to messages delivered in GAE. Subsequently, these associated negative feelings and/or judgments likely reduced the perceived persuasiveness of messages delivered by the VE source relative to those delivered by the GAE source. In addition to this explanation, source accent also influenced perceptions of argument quality. Specifically, strong quality messages were perceived to contain even stronger arguments when the source's accent was GAE rather than VE. Past research has shown that messages with stronger arguments are usually considered more persuasive than those with weaker arguments (Carpenter, 2015). Taken together, the VE source was likely considered less persuasive than the GAE source because it reduced fluency and lowered the perceived strength of message arguments.

Effects of Message Quality

Strong quality messages were more persuasive than weak quality messages, regardless of source accent and level of involvement. This result is partially consistent with prior literature, as the perceived strength of the arguments embedded in a persuasive message is often paramount to its success (Carpenter, 2015; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). For instance, the ELM suggests that under central processing conditions, an argument's impact on persuasion tends to be dictated by the positivity or negativity of the issue-relevant thoughts it induces (i.e., *elaboration valence;* Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). In addition, arguments that are considered logical and use verifiable facts to support their position are typically considered stronger than those that are illogical or rely on personal opinions (Carpenter, 2015). Subsequently, messages with stronger

arguments tend to induce more positive elaboration valence than messages with weaker arguments and are, therefore, considered more persuasive (O'Keefe, 2008). In line with this understanding, this study found that strong quality messages were perceived to contain stronger arguments than weak quality messages. Consequently, compared to weak quality messages, strong quality messages were likely perceived as more persuasive by participants because their strong arguments induced more positive issue-relevant thoughts (i.e., positive *elaboration valence*).

Effects of Issue Involvement

Participants in the low issue involvement condition were more persuaded than those in the high involvement condition, regardless of source accent and argument quality. Under the ELM, issue involvement typically influences persuasion by impacting a receiver's degree of motivation to engage in elaboration. Consequently, a participant's level of involvement generally acts as a moderating variable rather than one that impacts persuasion itself (Cacioppo & Goldman, 1986). While increased issue involvement typically motivates people to elaborate, the attitudinal direction of a message (i.e., pro or counter attitudinal) can also motivate its relative acceptance or rejection (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

For example, the messages used in this study advocated for a university policy requiring students to take a comprehensive exam to graduate. Unsurprisingly, these messages are inherently counter-attitudinal for most student participants (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Based on this understanding, it is possible that participants jointly considered the personal relevance of the issue and the attitudinal discrepancy between the message and their own initial attitudes during message processing. An inspection of means for both persuasive measures supports this point. While participants with low involvement found messages to be more persuasive ($M_{\text{agreement}}$ =

3.44; $M_{attitude}$ = 3.20) than those with high involvement ($M_{agreement}$ = 3.01; $M_{attitude}$ = 2.86), message persuasiveness was, overall, low and well below the scale midpoint (i.e., 4) in both involvement conditions (*p*s < .001). In other words, participants in this study held predominantly negative attitudes toward the advocated position and were unlikely to agree with it. Subsequently, participants who were told that they would have to take the exams (i.e., high involvement) were even more opposed and less likely to agree with the policy than participants who were told that they would not have to take the exam (i.e., low involvement).

In sum, participants were more persuaded when: a) the source spoke with a GAE than VE accent; b) the message contained strong rather than weak argument; and c) participants had low rather than high involvement. Stated differently, neither the effects of source accent nor the effects of argument quality were contingent on participants' level of involvement. At first glance, these findings appear to be inconsistent with the ELM. However, supplementary analyses pertaining to participants' processing motivation, ability, and depth may shed light on these inconsistent findings.

Supplemental Analyses

The ELM suggests that source factors primarily function as peripheral cues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Accordingly, they should have their most meaningful impact under low elaboration (i.e., peripheral route). In contrast, argument quality functions as a central cue and should have its most meaningful impact under high elaboration (i.e., central route). Hence, the present study expected that low involvement would induce peripheral processing and that high involvement would induce central processing. Interestingly, however, this may not have occurred.

Relative to high involvement, low involvement reduced recipients' motivation to process the message, as anticipated. However, contrary to expectations, this did not translate into lower elaboration: In both the low (M = 4.98) and high involvement conditions (M = 5.01), the extent of participants' elaboration was equally high and well above the scale midpoint (ps < .001). In addition, although the VE accent disrupted participants' ability to process the message (relative to the GAE accent), as expected, it also reduced their motivation to process the message. Ultimately, this resulted in lower elaboration in the VE (M = 4.73) rather than the GAE (M = 5.26) accent condition. However, a closer inspection of the means clearly shows that elaboration was high and above the scale midpoint in both conditions (ps < .001).

Given this, it appears that elaboration was relatively high in *all* conditions, meaning most participants were predominantly processing the message via the central route, regardless of involvement. Subsequently, it is not surprising that the main effect of argument quality emerged: Argument quality functioned as it should (per the ELM) under high elaboration conditions. However, the fact that the main effect of source accent emerged under relatively high elaboration conditions is notable, as it suggests that source accent may have functioned as an issue-relevant argument. In support of this assertion, source accent was shown to influence perceived message strength. Specifically, strong quality messages delivered by a GAE source were perceived to contain even stronger arguments than strong quality messages delivered by a VE source. Several theoretical and practical implications warrant discussion.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present study demonstrates that source accent's influence on persuasion is particularly pronounced as its impact does not seem to be contingent on other notable variables in the persuasion context (i.e., level of receiver involvement). In addition, interpretation through

the ELM's dual-process framework indicates that source accent functions in multiple roles during message processing. Taken together, these findings have several notable theoretical implications for the ELM. Subsequently, this section will first briefly discuss the theoretical contributions this study provides to the ELM by briefly discussing how source accent impacts persuasion, especially under high elaboration conditions. Second, several issues will be raised for using the ELM as the theoretical framework to explain source accent effects. Third, an alternate and potentially more parsimonious explanation of the findings will be offered from a unimodal perspective. Lastly, the practical implications of source accent effects in persuasive contexts will be discussed.

At a general level, this study's findings contribute to the broader literature utilizing the ELM, demonstrating its continued utility as a theoretical framework for examining how various variables are processed, function, and ultimately impact persuasion. In particular, the present study extends the understanding of how source accent functions and impacts persuasion under the ELM's dual-processing framework. For instance, empirical research guided by the ELM's central tenets has generally shown that source characteristics predominantly impact persuasion under low involvement conditions (Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). In line with this, the relatively few investigations of source accent effects suggest it primarily functions as a peripheral cue (Lalwani, Lwin, & Li, 2005). The findings in this study do not disagree that source accent may sometimes function as a peripheral cue, having more profound effects on persuasion when receivers are peripherally processing. However, this study's findings indicate that regardless of argument quality, source accent can *also* impact persuasion when receivers engage in central processing. Specifically, in some circumstances, source accent may function as a central cue (or argument) by increasing or decreasing the perceived strength of a message's arguments. This

finding interpreted via the ELM not only lends further support to the ELM's multiple role hypotheses but, importantly, also demonstrates how source accent functions and impacts persuasion under high elaboration conditions.

While the ELM provides a framework for examining how a source's accent is processed, functions, and ultimately impacts persuasion, its theoretical explanation is somewhat complex and its potential a priori predictions are likely to be uncertain. For instance, when source accent functions as a cue in more than one potential role it becomes unclear in what role it will ultimately function as before message processing occurs. An example of this is perhaps demonstrated best by this study's hypotheses (i.e., H4 & H5) not being supported. In addition, since source accent can function in several roles and the ELM deduces a cue's role based on the situational outcome, its impact is likely only inferable post hoc. Subsequently, source accent's impact on persuasion can always be explained with the ELM framework, thus essentially becoming unfalsifiable. These concerns towards the ELM's explanation of cues functioning in multiple roles are not new (e.g., Stiff & Boster, 1987; Stiff & Mongeau, 2003), and some scholars have defended the theory regarding these issues. For example, it has been suggested that role predictions via the ELM are possible to derive from the operation of moderating variables (Petty & Brinol, 2006; Petty et al., 1993). However, based on these points of issue, an alternative theoretical understanding of this study's findings that mitigates these concerns might best be offered by Kruglanski and Thompson's (1999) unimodel of persuasion.

In brief, the unimodel, based on Kruglanski's (1989) lay epistemic theory, suggests that persuasion is facilitated through a single underlying syllogistic process (Kruglanski et al., 2014). In contrast to the ELM's dual-process view—that message arguments and heuristic/peripheral cues are functionally distinct with a receiver's level of elaboration determining which to

privilege for message evaluation—the unimodel proposes that they are functionally equivalent during persuasive message processing (Kruglanski et al., 2014). In this way, the unimodel proposes that both message arguments and peripheral cues make up what is referred to as *evidence*—information relevant to a judgment (Kruglanski et al., 2006). The perceived "argument strength" of information considered evidence is based on the degree of a receiver's belief that the particular information is relevant to the judgment (Kruglanski et al., 2006). In other words, the more firmly a receiver believes that they can draw conclusions from the given piece of information, the more convincing it will be as evidence.

Guided by this understanding, under high elaboration conditions, source accent and message quality (i.e., given information) both likely served as information relevant to participants' decisions for implementing comprehensive exams (i.e., as evidence). Accordingly, compared to weak quality messages and the VE source, strong quality messages and the GAE source were considered more persuasive because participants believed more *firmly* (i.e., higher argument strength) that they functioned as supporting evidence for the claim. Stated differently, under high elaboration conditions, source accent and argument quality are both likely considered to be pieces of *evidence*, leading both to influence persuasion. This explanation synthesizes the multiple possibilities and interpretations for how source accent can impact persuasion; subsequently, it offers a more parsimonious explanation.

Understanding how source accent impacts persuasion is not only important theoretically, but also socially important. Notably, this study reveals that sources who speak with a non-Anglo foreign accent rather than a native accent tend to be less persuasive, even when participants do not readily attribute negative stereotype-based judgments to them. It appears that this continued persuasive downgrading occurs because non-Anglo foreign-accented speech reduces listeners'

processing fluency and lowers the perceived strength of their message arguments. Together, these findings extend the understanding of why foreign-accented speakers are routinely perceived as less persuasive than their native-speaking counterparts, even in high elaboration contexts: Their persuasive messages are not primarily evaluated on their informational merits but rather are evaluated in conjunction with perceptions of their accented speech. Consequently, this empirical investigation adds further support to the already wide range of social and professional settings where foreign-accented speakers encounter prejudice and discrimination in the US (Lippi-Green, 2012). This study's findings not only help reveal negative societal processes at work, but also have practical implications for companies or organizations using foreign-accented experts or speakers to deliver persuasive messages.

Most notably, when crafting an appeal, the results stress that organizations should ensure that their messages contain coherent and strong arguments to mitigate the potential adverse source accent-based effects. In particular, the careful consideration and use of strong message arguments will benefit an organization's persuasive message in two ways. First, messages containing strong arguments should be considered more persuasive than those containing weak arguments, regardless of the source's accent. Second, using logically sound arguments and credible evidence in a persuasive message should help mitigate the difficulty receivers may experience when processing a spoken message delivered in foreign-accented speech. This increase in receivers' processing fluency may also help to reduce negative feelings and improve overall judgments toward the message's claim.

Future Directions and Limitations

While this dissertation certainly constitutes a valuable step forward in understanding the impact of source accent on persuasion, there are still areas for future research to investigate and

limitations that provide room for improvement. First, future researchers should investigate the effects of source accent and message quality with participants under explicitly high and low levels of elaboration. As previously noted, participants in this study were likely experiencing more extensive levels of elaboration regardless of their level of involvement. Therefore, it would be beneficial to see in a single experiment whether source accent and message quality interplay at these lower levels as predicted by the ELM. Second, future research should explore whether these findings generalize to other persuasive contexts and variables that interact with a source's accent. For example, the relative persuasiveness of accented speakers has been shown to be impacted by certain message topics, advocated positions, and receiver group identities (DeShields & Kara, 2011; DeShields et al., 1997; Giles et al., 1995). Lastly, findings from the supplemental analyses indicate that source accent may also impact persuasion via a participant's motivation and ability to process messages, indicating that it may function as an elaboration moderator. While a foreign accent did not negatively impact elaboration enough to induce peripheral processing, the underlying mechanics of this finding are worth exploring.

This study also has several important limitations, which may provide avenues for future research to improve upon. First, it examined the effects of source accent on persuasion using only a single non-Anglo foreign-accented variety. Using a single foreign accent raises concerns about how findings generalize to other foreign accents. For example, not all foreign-accented speakers are evaluated equally, as an evaluative hierarchy tends to emerge (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). Speakers who belong or are perceived to be members of stigmatized foreign groups (i.e., non-Anglosphere, Southeast Asia) are typically evaluated less favorably than speakers associated with non-stigmatized groups (i.e., Anglosphere, Western Europe). Theoretically, similar results should therefore be obtained with similarly stigmatized non-Anglo

foreign accents. Nonetheless, future research should attempt to replicate these results using a more comprehensive range of stigmatized and non-stigmatized varieties. Second, and related, the current study relied on only a single speaker; future studies should attempt to generalize these findings to multiple speakers.

Third, while this dissertation successfully manipulated involvement, the low involvement manipulation did not cause participants to engage in low levels of elaboration. Accordingly, the results of this study are limited, offering insight into how source accent functions only when participants are predominantly processing information centrally. Methodologically, this study followed prior studies (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) that manipulated issue involvement by changing the advocated date for exam policy implementation (i.e., next year vs. ten years) to increase or decrease student participant involvement. While it is not clear why this study's methodological replication of issue involvement did not obtain the desired low elaboration effect, it is possible that an alternative involvement manipulation may have more success. For example, other experiments have manipulated involvement by changing the school at which the exams will be implemented: theirs or another (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Accordingly, to fully understand source accent effects under both processing routes in the same experiment, future research could attempt to employ more successful and/or varying means for producing lower elaboration levels.

Fourth, this study predicted a three-way interaction because source accent was theorized to function as an elaboration moderator by reducing receivers' ability to process the message. As previously mentioned, the foreign-accented source significantly reduced receivers' ability to process messages relative to the native-accented source. Even so, ability in the foreign-accented source condition remained relatively high and not significantly lower than the scale midpoint

(i.e., 4), $t(172) = -.27$, $p = .395$, $d = -.02$. ELM literature suggests that for a specific variable to redirect processing to the alternate route, it must considerably impact a receiver's ability to process information (i.e., medium to high levels, see Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). Accordingly, the foreign-accented source may not have reduced ability substantially enough to prevent central processing of the message. Based on this understanding, had the foreign-accented source spoken with an even stronger accent, perhaps it would have disrupted ability even further and initiated peripheral processing; future studies should examine this possibility.

It is also possible that the foreign-accented source used in the present study would have had a more substantial impact on receivers' ability to process the message had the participant sample been different. Past research has shown that prior exposure to a particular accent can facilitate the subsequent processing of speech produced in that accent (Cristia et al., 2012). This study relied on a sample of undergraduates at a large research university. Due to the diversity of the student and faculty population at such universities, the participants likely had some prior exposure to foreign-accented speakers (e.g., international students or professors) from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds, which may have facilitated their ability to process foreign-accented speech. Had the sample been composed of non-student participants, particularly those who have had minimal exposure to foreign-accented speakers, perhaps the foreign-accented speaker would have caused a more substantial disruption to their ability to process the message. Indeed, if this is the case, typical undergraduate students' past exposure to foreign accents may explain why participants in the present study reported experiencing only moderate levels of difficulty when listening to the VE accented source. Accordingly, future studies may wish to utilize a more diverse sample of participants.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined how source accent and message quality influence persuasion under low and high involvement. It was theorized that the effects of source accent and argument quality on persuasion would be contingent on a receiver's level of involvement. However, the expected three-way interaction between source accent, argument quality, and listener involvement failed to emerge. Instead, participants were more persuaded when the source spoke with a GAE than a VE accent; when the message contained strong rather than weak arguments; and when participants had low rather than high message involvement. Taken together, these results suggest that source accent is likely to impact persuasion regardless of a receivers' extent of elaboration. Overall, these findings extend the theoretical and practical implications of source characteristics by providing further evidence of the effects of source accent on persuasion and offering practical suggestions for foreign-accented speakers in persuasive contexts.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Issue Involvement Statement for Pretest 1

Thank you for taking the time to help the College of Communication and Information by taking part in this study. Please read the statement below before continuing:

The University of Kentucky is currently undergoing an academic reevaluation and President Eli Capilouto is seeking recommendations about policy changes to be instituted next year (in 10 years). To obtain a variety of opinions about the university and its future, the president has asked various individuals and groups from the colleges to prepare policy statements.

The College of Communication and Information is cooperating and aiding the university administration by having the various statements rated for their quality, prior to them being released to the public.

One of the suggested policy changes that the University of Kentucky is considering implementing is a **Senior Comprehensive Exam Requirement** for graduation. If this requirement is implemented, all seniors would have to pass a comprehensive exam in their major area prior to receiving their diploma. Students who do not pass the exam will not be able to graduate. The requirement would begin in the spring **next year (in 10 years)**, meaning that **all seniors graduating in Spring 2022 (2032) or later would be subject to the requirement**. In other words, you **would (not)** be subject to this requirement personally (but your peers in future generations would).

You will now be presented with six messages containing the summary sections of the prepared reports. They each outline different reasons for implementing the Senior Comprehensive Exam Requirement in the spring next year (i.e., Spring of 2022/2032) (in 10 years). Please read each of them closely. After reading each one, you will be asked several questions about the statement you have just read.

APPENDIX 2. Message Scripts Used in Pretests

For all scripts see Petty and Cacioppo (1986a).

Message 1

Strong

The National Scholarship Achievement Board recently revealed the results of a five-year study conducted on the effectiveness of comprehensive exams at Duke University. The results of the study showed that since the comprehensive exam has been introduced at Duke, the grade point average of undergraduates has increased by 31%. At comparable schools without the exams, grades increased by only 8% over the same period. The prospect of a comprehensive exam clearly seems to be effective in challenging students to work harder and faculty to teach more effectively. It is likely that the benefits observed at Duke University could also be observed at other universities that adopt the exam policy.

Weak

The National Scholarship Achievement Board recently revealed the results of a study they conducted on the effectiveness of comprehensive exams at Duke University. One major finding was that student anxiety had increased by 31%. At comparable schools without the exam, anxiety increased by only 8%. The Board reasoned that anxiety over the exams, or fear of failure, would motivate students to study more in their courses while they were taking them. It is likely that this increase in anxiety observed at Duke University would also be observed and be of benefit at other universities that adopt the exam policy.

Message 2

Strong

Graduate schools and law and medical schools are beginning to show clear and significant preferences for students who received their undergraduate degrees from institutions with comprehensive exams. As the Dean of the Harvard Business School said: “Although Harvard has not and will not discriminate on the basis of race or sex, we do show a strong preference for applicants who have demonstrated their expertise in an area of study by passing a comprehensive exam at the undergraduate level.” Admissions officers of law, medical, and graduate schools have also endorsed the comprehensive exam policy and indicated that students at schools without the exams would be at a significant disadvantage in the very near future. Thus, the institution of comprehensive exams will be an aid to those who seek admission to graduate and professional schools after graduation.

Weak

Graduate students have always had to take a comprehensive exam in their major area before receiving their degrees, and it is only fair that undergraduates should have to take them also. As the Dean of the Harvard Business School said, “If a comprehensive exam is considered necessary to demonstrate competence for a masters or doctoral degree, by what logic is it excluded as a requirement for the bachelors degree? What administrators don’t realize is that this is discrimination just like discrimination based on academic majors. There would be a

lot of trouble if universities required only students in some majors to take comprehensive exams but not students in other majors. Yet universities all over the country are getting away with the same thing by requiring graduate students but not undergraduates to take the exams." Thus, the institution of comprehensive exams could be as useful for undergraduates as they have been for graduate students.

Message 3

Strong

A member of the Board of Curators has stated publicly that alumni nationwide have refused to increase their contributions to the University because of what they feel are lax educational standards. In fact, the prestigious National Accrediting Board of Higher Education (NAB) has recently rejected the University's application for membership citing lack of a comprehensive exam as a major reason. Accreditation by the NAB enhances a university's reputation to graduate schools, employers, and demonstrates to alumni that the school is worth supporting. A recent survey of influential alumni in corporations and the state legislature has revealed that contributions would improve significantly if the exams were instituted. With increased alumni support, continued increases in tuition might be avoided.

Weak

A member of the Board of Curators has stated publicly that his brother had to take a comprehensive exam while in college and now he is manager of a large restaurant. He indicated that he realized the value of the exams since their father was a migrant worker who didn't even finish high school. He also indicated that the university has received several letters from parents in support of the exam. In fact, 4 of the 6 parents who wrote in thought that the exams were an excellent idea. Also, the prestigious National Accrediting Board of Higher Education seeks input from parents as well as students, faculty, and administrators when evaluating a university. Since most parents contribute financially to their child's education and also favor the exams, the university should institute them. This would show that the university is willing to listen to and follow the parents' wishes over those of students and faculty who may simply fear the work involved in comprehensive exams.

Message 4

Strong

An interesting and important feature of the comprehensive exam requirement is that it has led to a significant improvement in the quality of undergraduate teaching in the schools where it has been tried. Data from the Educational Testing Service confirm that teachers and courses at the schools with comprehensive exams were rated more positively by students after the exams than before. The improvement in teaching effectiveness appears to be due to departments placing more emphasis on high quality and stimulating teaching because departments look bad when their majors do poorly on the exam. For example, at the

University of Florida, student ratings of courses increased significantly after comprehensive exams were instituted.

Weak

An interesting and important feature of the comprehensive exam requirement is that if the exams were instituted nationwide, students across the country could use the exam to compare their achievements with those of students at other schools. Data from the Educational Testing Service confirm that students are eager to compare their grades in a particular course with those of other students. Just imagine how exciting it would be for students in the Midwest to be able to compare their scores with those of students at the University of Florida, for example. This possibility for comparison would provide an incentive for students to study and achieve as high a score as possible so they would not be embarrassed when comparing scores with their friends.

Message 5

Strong

Data from the University of Virginia, where comprehensive exams were recently instituted, indicate that the average starting salary of graduates increased over $4000 over the two-year period in which the exams were begun. At comparable universities without comprehensive exams, salaries increased only $850 over the same period. As Saul Siegel, a vice-president of IBM put it in Business Week recently, "We are much quicker to offer the large salaries and executive positions to these kids because by passing their area exam, they have proven to us that they have expertise in their area rather than being people who may or may not be dependable and reliable." Another benefit is that universities with the exams attract larger and more well-known corporations to campus to recruit students for their open positions. The end result is that students at schools with comprehensive exams have a 55% greater chance of landing a good job than students at schools without the exams.

Weak

Data from the University of Virginia show that some students favor the senior comprehensive exam policy. For example, one faculty member asked his son to survey his fellow students at the school since it recently instituted the exams. Over 55% of his son's friends agreed that in principle, the exams would be beneficial. Of course, they didn't all agree but the fact that most did proves that undergraduates want the exams. As Saul Siege, a student whose father is a vice-president of IBM, wrote in the school newspaper: "The history of the exams can be traced to the ancient Greeks. If comprehensive exams were to be instituted, we could feel pleasure at following traditions begun by Plato and Aristotle. Even if there were no other benefits of the exams, it would be worth it just to follow tradition."

APPENDIX 3. Updated Issue Involvement Manipulation Statement (Pretest 2)

High Involvement Condition
Thank you for taking the time to help the College of Communication and Information by taking part in this study. Please read the statement below before continuing:

The University of Kentucky is currently undergoing an academic reevaluation and President Eli Capilouto is seeking recommendations about policy changes to be instituted **next year**. To obtain a variety of opinions about the university and its future, the president has asked various individuals and groups from the colleges to prepare policy statements.

The College of Communication and Information is cooperating and aiding the university administration by having the various statements rated for their quality, prior to them being released to the public.

One of the suggested policy changes that the University of Kentucky is considering implementing is a **Senior Comprehensive Exam Requirement for graduation**. If this requirement is implemented, all seniors would have to pass a comprehensive exam in their major area prior to receiving their diploma. Students who do not pass the exam will not be able to graduate. The requirement would begin in the **Spring next year**, meaning that all seniors graduating in **Spring 2023 or later would be subject to the requirement**. In other words, **YOU WILL** be subject to this requirement personally.

Low Involvement Condition
Thank you for taking the time to help the College of Communication and Information by taking part in this study. Please read the statement below before continuing:

The University of Kentucky is currently undergoing an academic reevaluation and President Eli Capilouto is seeking recommendations about policy changes to be instituted in **10 years**. To obtain a variety of opinions about the university and its future, the president has asked various individuals and groups from the colleges to prepare policy statements.

The College of Communication and Information is cooperating and aiding the university administration by having the various statements rated for their quality, prior to them being released to the public.

One of the suggested policy changes that the University of Kentucky is considering implementing is a **Senior Comprehensive Exam Requirement for graduation**. If this requirement is implemented, all seniors would have to pass a comprehensive exam in their major area prior to receiving their diploma. Students who do not pass the exam will not be able to graduate. The requirement would begin in the **Spring in 10 years**, meaning that all seniors graduating in **Spring 2033 or later would be subject to the requirement**. In other words, you will **NOT** be subject to this requirement personally, but your peers in future generations would.

APPENDIX 4. Main Experiment Scales

Issue Involvement (adapted from Leippe & Elkin, 1987)
(Note: *italics* indicate changes to the statement for the low involvement condition)

Your requirement to take a **Senior Comprehensive Exam for graduation** would begin **next year [*in 10 years*]** in the **Spring of 2023 [*Spring 2033*]**. This means that **YOU WILL [*NOT*]** be subject to this requirement.

Using the scale below, please indicate how important this issue is to you?

Not at all						**Very**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Language Attitudes (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017; Zahn & Hopper, 1985)
Please rate the speaker you heard on the following traits:

	Not at all						**Very**
Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Smart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Competent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Accent Strength, Similarity, and Familiarity (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, & Tatum, 2017)
Please answer the following questions about the speaker:

	Not at all						**Very**
How **strong** was the speaker's accent?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How **similar** was the speaker's accent to your **own** accent?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

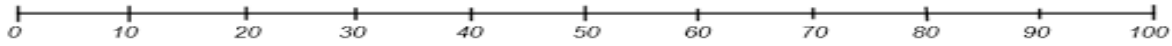
How **familiar** was the speaker's accent to you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Processing Fluency (Dragojevic, 2019; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016)
Please answer the following questions about the speaker:

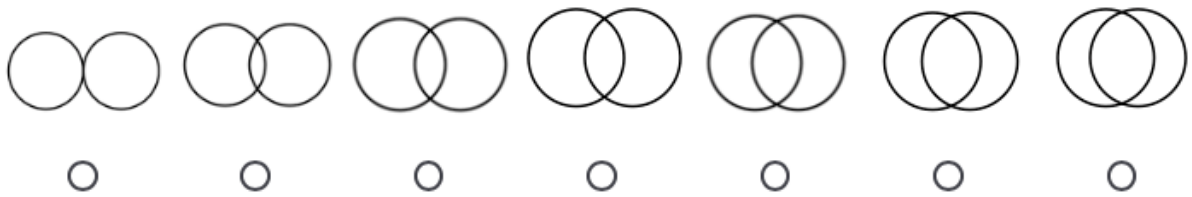
	Not at all						**Very**
How **easy** was the speaker to **understand**?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How **clear** was the speaker?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How **effortful** was it to **understand** the speaker?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How **comprehensible** was the speaker?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Feeling Thermometer (Dragojevic, 2019)
My feelings toward the speaker are:

Very negative **Very positive**



Sense of Connection (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Dragovic & Gile, 2014)
Please select the pair of circles that best represents your sense of connection with the speaker



Speaker Categorization (Dragojevic & Goaltey-Soan, 2020)
Please answer the following questions about the speaker:

Where do you think the speaker is from?: _____

The speaker I heard was a: _____

American Foreigner

• • • • • • •

Argument Quality (adapted from Park et al, 2007)
Please respond to the questions below on their associated scales.

	Not at all						**Very**
The statement made a strong argument for implementing comprehensive exams:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The statement made a convincing case for implementing comprehensive exams:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The statement made a weak argument for implementing comprehensive exams:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Recall Manipulation Check
At the beginning of this study, you were told about a new comprehensive exam policy the University of Kentucky is planning to implement. When does the university plan to implement this new policy?

- Spring 2023
- Spring 2033
- Spring 2043

Message Processing Quality (Wolski, & Nabi, 2000)
The items are assessed with 7-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Think about when you were listening to the recorded message. Please indicate on the scale below your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

Depth

1. I focused on the arguments the speaker made.
2. While listening to the message, I paid close attention to each point that was made.
3. I didn't pay close attention to the speaker's arguments.
4. I concentrated on the message arguments.

Ability

1. My mind kept wandering as I listened to the message
2. While listening, I didn't let myself get distracted from focusing on the message content.
3. While listening to the message, thoughts about other things kept popping up in my head.
4. My mind did not wander as I listened to the message.

Motivation

1. This issue is interesting to me
2. I was interested in what the speaker had to say.
3. I don't find this issue very interesting.
4. I was motivated to listen to this message.

Bias

1. I remained objective about the message content
2. My prior beliefs about the issue prevented me from being objective.
3. I tried not to let how I feel about the issue influence how I listened to the message.
4. I tried to remain impartial as I listened to the message.

Adapted Message Processing Quality (adapted from Wolski, & Nabi, 2000)
When presented with the speaker's message___

	Not at all						**Very**
I was focused when listening to its content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I was motivated to listen to them because of the issue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I concentrated on their arguments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I was influenced by my prior attitudes towards the issue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Attitude Toward the Issue (Ivanov et al., 2017)
Please rate on the following scales how you feel about comprehensive exams:

negative						positive
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
like						dislike
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
bad						good
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
unfavorable						favorable
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
undesirable						desirable
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
wrong						right
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.

Message Agreement (Petty, Cacioppo, & Heesacker, 1981)

	Strongly disagree						**Strongly agree**
To what extent do you agree with the proposal to institute a comprehensive exam requirement for seniors at the University of Kentucky.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Demographic Questions
Please answer the following questions:

What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Genderqueer
- Non-Binary
- Other(Please State):___
- Prefer not to reply

What is your age (in years)? _____ [use numbers only]

Which geographic region of the U.S. do you most identify with? (*please choose only one*)

- West Coast
- South
- East Coast
- Midwest
- None of the above

What is your race/ethnicity? *(may choose more than one)*

- White
- Hispanic/Latina/Latino
- Black / African American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian / Asian American
- Other (Specify): _____

What was the first language you learned to read at home? (*may choose more than one)*

- English
- Spanish
- Other (Specify): _____

Are you an international student?

- Yes
- No

In which country/countries do you have citizenship? *(may choose more than one)*

- United States
- Other (Specify): _____

What is your current class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other (Specify): _____

When do you plan to graduate?

- Fall 2021
- Spring 2022
- Fall 2022
- Spring 2023
- Fall 2023
- Spring 2024
- Fall 2024
- Spring 2025
- Fall 2025
- Fall 2026
- Spring 2026
- Other (Specify): _____

Have you participated in a similar study during this or a previous semester at UK?

- No
- Yes

Were you given or told any information about this study by another student who had completed it before you? (Don't worry, no matter your response, you will still receive course credit!)

- No
- Yes; please briefly state the details you were provided_____

Did you experience any technical difficulties while completing this study? (Don't worry, you will still receive course credit!)

- No
- Yes; please specify ____

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VITA

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Education

M.S. **Communication** **May 2016**
Illinois State University, Normal, IL
Master's Thesis–*Words apart: A study of attitudes towards varieties of South African accents in a United States employment scenario*

B.A. **Communication: Broadcast & Electronic Media, & Public Relations** **May 2013**
Campbell University, Buies Creek, NC

Academic Appointments

Graduate Teaching Instructor, College of Communication and Information **2017 – 2021**
The University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Adjunct Faculty Lecturer, Communication Studies **2016 – 2017**
DePaul University, Chicago, IL

Adjunct Faculty Lecturer, Speech Communication **2016 – 2017**
College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL

Graduate Teaching Instructor, School of Communication **2014 – 2016**
Illinois State University, Normal, IL,

Scholastic Awards and Professional Honors

The University of Kentucky, *Lexington, KY*
- ❖ Dissertation Fellowship Award **2021**
- ❖ Graduate Teaching Excellence Award Winner **2019**
- ❖ Vice President of the Communication Graduate Student Association **2018 – 2019**

International Communication Association (ICA), *Washington, DC* **2019**
- ❖ Top Paper – Intergroup Communication Interest Group

Central States Communication Association (CSCA), *Minneapolis, MN* **2017**
- ❖ Top Paper – Intercultural Communication Interest Group

National Communication Association (NCA), *Philadelphia, PA*
- ❖ Outstanding Thesis Award Winner: Master's Education Section, Top Thesis–Quantitative **2016**

Illinois State University, *Normal, IL*
- ❖ Top Master's Thesis Award Nomination -NCA Master's Education Section **2016**
- ❖ James L. Fisher Outstanding Thesis Competition Award Nomination **2016**
- ❖ Outstanding University Graduate Teaching Award Winner **2015**
- ❖ Peer Mentor of the Basic Course **2015 – 2016**
- ❖ Graduate Teaching Assistantship **2014 – 2016**
- ❖ Member of the Honor's Society **2014 – 2016**

Campbell University, *Buies Creek, NC*
- ❖ Graduated Cum Laude **2013**

- ❖ Wiggins Memorial Academic Symposium Certificate of Achievement **2013**
- ❖ President's and Dean's List **2010 – 2013**
- ❖ NCAA Big South Presidents Honor Roll **2011 – 2013**
- ❖ Member of the Honor Society Lambda Pi Eta **2011 – 2016**
- ❖ Academic All-Conference award **2010 – 2013**
- ❖ Golf Athletic Scholarship **2009 – 2013**

Professional Publications

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Pilny, A., Xiang, L., Huber, **Goatley-Soan, S**., & Silberman, W. (2021). The impact of contact tracing on the spread of COVID-19: An egocentric agent-based model. *Connections.*

Dragojevic, M., & **Goatley-Soan, S.** (2020). Americans' attitudes toward foreign accents: Evaluative hierarchies and underlying processes. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development,* 1-15. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2020.1735402

Ivanov, B., Hester, E., Martin, J., Silberman, W., Slone, A., **Goatley-Soan, S**., Geegan, S., Parker, K. A., Herrington, T., Riker, S., & Anderson, A. (2020). Persistence of emotion in the process of inoculation: Experiencing post-attack threat, fear, anger, happiness, sadness, and surprise. *Communication Quarterly*.

Parker, K. A., Geegan, S., Ivanov, B., Slone, A., Silberman, W., Martin, J., Hester, E., **Goatley-Soan, S**., Anderson, A., Herrington, T., & Riker, S. (2019). Defending democracy: Inoculation's efficacy in protecting First Amendment attitudes. *Communication Studies,* 1–18. doi:10.1080/10510974.2019.1671889

Goatley-Soan, S., & Baldwin, J. R. (2018). Words apart: A study of attitudes towards varieties of South African accents in a United States employment scenario. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *37*(6), 692-705. doi:10.1177/0261927x18800129

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

Dragojevic, M., & **Goatley-Soan, S.** (Accepted). The verbal-guise technique. In Kircher R. and Zipp L. ed. *Research Methods in Language Attitudes*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Published Conference Proceeding

Smith, M., **Goatley-Soan, S**., Brown, M., Brown., B., & Hawkin, K. (2013). Oral history: Mrs. Dorothea Stewart-Gilbert. *Annual Academic Symposium,* Campbell University.

Conference Papers and Professional Presentations:

Goatley-Soan, S., & Dragojevic, M. (2019). Do accents speak louder than words? Americans' attitudes towards British accents. Conference paper accepted for the *69th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*, Intergroup Caucus, Washington DC, 2019. **Top Paper.**

Dragojevic, M., & **Goatley-Soan, S.** (2019). Americans' attitudes toward foreign accents: Evaluative hierarchies. Conference paper abstract accepted for the *69th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*, IALSP panel. Washington DC, 2019.

Parker, K. A., Geegan, S., Ivanov, B…. **Goatley-Soan, S**. (2019). Defending democracy: inoculation's efficacy in protecting First Amendment attitudes. Conference paper accepted for the *69th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*, Information Systems Caucus, Washington DC, 2019.

Dragojevic, M., & **Goatley-Soan, S.** (2018). Americans' attitudes toward foreign accents. Co-author on abstract for the development, experience, and impact of language-based prejudice symposium at *the International Conference of Language and Social Psychology* (ICLASP), Edmonton, Canada, 2018.

Goatley-Soan, S, & Baldwin, J. R. (2017). Words apart: A study of attitudes towards varieties of South African accents in a United States employment scenario. Manuscript accepted by *CSCA 2017 Central States Communication Association* as a competitive paper. Minneapolis, 2017. **Top Paper.**

Goatley-Soan, S. (2016). Words apart: A study of attitudes towards varieties of South African accents in a United States employment scenario (master's thesis). Manuscript accepted to the *Master's Education Section* of the National Communication Association Conference, Philadelphia, 2016. **Top Quantitative Master's Thesis Winner.**

Goatley-Soan, S. (2015, November). Language education policy and the medium of instruction issue in post-colonial Africa **–** Presentational guest lecture for *Eng. 364 –Sociolinguistics at Illinois State Universit*y. Course Professor: Dr. Susan Burt.

Goatley-Soan, S., Heyne, R., Lizzie, C., Shebib, S., & Winter, C. (2015, August). Classroom management: How to deal with a student who…Requested by Dr. Cheri J. Simonds and Dr. John F. Hooker, *School of Communication, Illinois State University*. Guest speaker for graduate teaching assistant summer training program, Illinois State University.

Smith, M., **Goatley-Soan, S.,** & Hawkin, K. (2013, March). Oral history: Mrs. Dorothea Stewart-Gilbert. *Annual Academic Symposium*, Campbell University.

Signed: Sean Goatley-Soan