The Effects of Accents on Speakers’ Credibility

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Abstract

We will examine whether the presence of an accent has an effect on speakers’ credibility. Researchers will randomly assign participants to one of three conditions including Standard English accented (control), Southern English accented (experimental), or Spanish (experimental) accented speaker. Then, participants will take a survey evaluating the lecturer reliability. Data will be analyzed using a one-way ANOVA test. Results will reveal that participants in the experimental groups (Southern English and Spanish accents) will rate speakers as less trustworthy and the lecture as more complicated than participants in the control (Standard English accent) group. Findings will suggest that listeners tend to perceive messages from speakers with a different accent than their own as less credible and valuable.

Keywords: accent, credibility, speaker, listener, prejudice
The Effects of Accents on Speakers’ Credibility

Listeners not only evaluate verbal messages in terms of meaning encoded but also in terms of the speaker’s characteristics. When people listen to spoken messages, they immediately and unintentionally categorize the speaker regarding characteristics such as age, sex, social position, and accent. How individuals perceive the speaker affects how they understand the message and the credibility that they attribute to the speaker. People tend to perceive speakers that are similar to them regarding gender, personality, and ethnic background/accent as more reliable, a phenomenon called the similarity-attraction effect (Dahlbäck, Wang, Nass, & Alwin, 2007).

Dahlbäck, Wang, Nass, and Alwin (2007) conducted a study that showed that the similarity-attraction effect can be more influential than other elements that can also affect a speaker’s credibility, such as expertise. In the study, American and Swedish participants listened to traveler information on a website regarding an American or Swedish city. Participants listened to the information in English, either in a Swedish accent or in an American accent. Then, participants evaluated the speakers’ expertise and voice characteristics. Results showed that participants preferred a voice with an accent similar to their own. In addition, participants rated speakers with an accent similar to their own as more knowledgeable in the topic, even when the speakers were providing information of a city from a country different than their own. For instance, Americans rated the American speakers higher in expertise, even when they were talking about Stockholm, a Swedish city (Dahlbäck, Wang, Nass, & Alwin, 2007).

Tsalikis, deShields, and LaTour (1991) conducted a study that reinforced the similarity-attraction effect. In this study, researchers focused on the impact of accents in a marketing context. They studied how consumers perceived salespersons regarding reliability, proficiency,
kindliness, and ultimately their intentions to buy. Participants listened to a tape recorded by either a Greek-accented English salesperson or a salesperson with a Standard English American accent. The recording message consisted of the same sales pitch. Findings suggested that for an American audience, a sales pitch in standard American accent induced more satisfactory evaluations on all tested dimensions than one in Greek-accented English. Thus, the results suggested that salespersons who spoke with a similar accent than consumers were more able to convey reliability and in the end were more likely to persuade consumers to buy their products (Tsalikis, deShields, & LaTour, 1991).

Listeners are not only influenced by how similar a speaker’s accent is to their own, but also by the bias and stereotypes they associate with particular accents. Dixon, Mahony, and Cocks (2002) conducted a study that showed the tendency that people have of automatically classifying a speakers worth according to their accent. Researchers analyzed the effect of an accent on the attribution of guilt. Participants listened to a recording between a policeman and a suspect, either with a regional English accent or with a Standard English accent. The results showed that participants rated the suspect with a regional English accent as significantly guiltier than the suspect with a Standard English accent. This finding suggested that speakers easily detect foreign accented speech and automatically classify the speaker as an out-group member. As a result, the listener associated the speaker with stereotypes, which stimulated prejudice that ultimately negatively affected the trustworthiness of the speaker. Therefore, it is the prejudice that results from having an accent, not the accent itself, which affects a speaker’s credibility (Dixon, Mahony, & Cocks, 2002).

On the other hand, Lev-Ari and Keysar (2010) suggested that it is the accent per-se, not the bias, which affects the reliability of a speaker. Researchers proposed that the presence of an
accents on speakers’ credibility

5

Accent worsens the fluency of the speech which causes speakers to seem less credible. Researchers conducted two experiments. In the first experiment, participants evaluated the reliability of trivial statements written by the experimenter but read out loud by either native English speakers, non-native English speakers with a mild accent, or non-native English speakers with a heavy accent. Results suggested that participants perceived statements as less credible when recited by non-native speakers. Results also showed that the more heavy the speaker’s accent, the less credible they were rated (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010).

In the second experiment, Lev-Ari and Keysar (2010) investigated whether or not awareness of the phenomenon suggested in the first experiment reduced the effect of accent on perceived trustworthiness. In order to measure how awareness influenced results, researchers explained to participants the true nature of their study; that is, that they were trying to analyze whether or not the presence of an accent affected a speaker’s reliability. The results of the second experiment showed that when participants were informed beforehand that the presence of an accent could influence their evaluation, they tried to avoid this misattribution. However, results also showed that participants only succeeded when speakers had a mild accent, but were incapable of avoiding the effect of the accent when speakers had a heavy accent. Thus, these findings suggested that having a strong accent can decrease credibility, even when listeners are trying not to base their judgments on the speaker’s accent (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010).

Carlson and McHenry (2006) provided insight on how the presence of an accent can affect perceived ethnicity and comprehensibility, and ultimately detriment employability. In the study, 60 specialists of human resources departments evaluated three applicants. The candidates were English speakers with a Spanish, Asian, or American Vernacular English accent. The applicants were actors and read the same script for each condition. However, they accentuated
their accent in one condition more than in the other one, creating two different conditions: minimally perceived accent vs. maximally perceived accent. Results showed that the ethnicity of the applicants did not affect employability if accent was minimally perceived. However, ethnicity negatively affected employability of applicants with a maximally perceived accent. These findings also suggested that having a heavy accent is considerably more detrimental than having a mild accent when trying to convey knowledge and trustworthiness (Carlson & McHenry, 2006).

Laiwani, May, and Kuah Leng (2005) conducted a study that contributed to the idea that the presence of an accent can affect speakers’ employability. The researchers analyzed how accents affect advertisers’ choice of spokespersons. In the study, participants evaluated trustworthiness of spokesperson candidates. Participants listened to a spokesperson selling the same product either in a Standard English accent or in a Singaporean English accent. Results showed that participants rated the Standard English speakers as more credible. Findings also suggested that participants were more likely to hire spokespersons who had a Standard English accent (Laiwani, May, & Kuah Leng 2005).

Familiarity with particular accents also influences how listeners perceive accented speakers. Carey, Mannell, and Dunn (2011) conducted a study to analyze the impact of a rater’s familiarity with a candidate’s accent on the evaluation of oral proficiency interviews. In the study, 99 International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examiners assessed three candidates. The candidates had a Chinese English accent, a Korean English accent, and an Indian English accent. Examiners had either minimal contact, no contact, or prolonged contact to the particular candidate’s accent prior to the experiment. The findings showed that examiners scored the candidate’s oral proficiency and pronunciation higher when they had prolonged
contact with the particular accent than when they had minimal or no contact. Thus, data suggested that listeners tend to be more credible when they are familiar with a speaker’s accent (Carey, Mannell, & Dunn, 2011).

The effects of accents have a big impact on the scholastic field because professors need to present themselves as authoritative and trustworthy in order to inspire and stimulate their students. McLean (2007) conducted a study that provided insight on the role of accents in an educational context. The researcher interviewed seven Asian-born female professors in U.S colleges. Participants answered a sequence of questions regarding several topics including experience in the educational field, fears and concerns, and self-perceptions. The data showed that all participants shared a main trait. They all communicated low self-confidence regarding their own English proficiency and concern about their accent having a potential negative impact on their lectures. In addition, most of them reported detecting uncertainty from students caused by their accents. McKlean noticed that even awarded participants, or participants who never received complaints from students regarding their accents, were self-conscious about their accents. These findings suggested that the accented speakers’ potential low self-confidence on their proficiency might also have a detrimental effect on their credibility (McKlean, 2007).

Like McKlean’s study (2007), Thomas’s (1999) research focused on the educational field. He explained several challenges that non-native teachers face because of their accent and how these affect their credibility. Thomas stated that non-native teachers who have a foreign accent experience three main drawbacks. First, they have a harder time connecting with students because the disparity of accents makes students perceive they have fewer things in common with the instructor. Second, it is difficult for them to convey authority because of the biases and stereotypes of the students. Finally, they face a harder time throughout the hiring process
because many people still consider that being a native speaker of English is an essential requisite to teach higher education. Thus, Thomas’s ideas contribute to the concept that having an accent can affect a speaker’s reliability due to biases and stereotypes in our society (Thomas, 1999).

Previous research provides data that suggest that having an accent can negatively affect a speaker’s credibility, authority, employability, and success. Our study would provide more insight on the impact of accents on the credibility of speakers. We hypothesize that speakers with an accent will be rated as less trustworthy or less clear than speakers who do not have an accent. Our research will focus on the impact of accents in an educational context since our three conditions will be a recording of a college level biology lecture in different accents. We believe that our data will be useful to discuss the implications of being a non-native teacher with an accent as far as conveying authority and reliability.

Method

Participants

Participants will consist of 60 Longwood University students (30 males and 30 females) and will be recruited through an online system. Participants will range from 18 to 24 years old, with an average age of 21 years old. There will be 20 freshmen, 20 sophomores, 10 juniors, and 10 seniors. All Participants will receive one extra credit point for a psychology class they are enrolled in.

Materials and Procedure

Three speakers with different accents including a Standard English Accent, a Southern English Accent, and a Spanish Accent will make a recording speaking in English of the same lecture. Speakers will have the same sex, similar age, and will talk in a similar pace. We will randomly assign participants (through block randomization) to one of the three conditions. The
content of the recording will consist of a collegiate level biology lecture and will last about 10 minutes (Appendix A). We will play the recording through the classroom speakers for all participants of a certain group to listen at the same time.

Then, we will ask participants to complete a survey (Appendix B). This survey will contain 10 statements designated to evaluate participants’ understanding of the content and speaker’s trustworthiness. Participants will rate each statement in a scale from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* (from 1 to 5). We will use statements such, “I easily understood the content of the lecture” or “The information was presented in a clear way” to evaluate the participants’ understanding of the lecture. The survey will also include statements such as “The lecturer was reliable” or “The speaker was an expert in the field” to assess whether participants trusted the speaker. We will then be comparing scores between accented and non-accented speakers.

**Results**

Our first hypothesis is that participants in the experimental groups (those who listened to the Southern English accented speaker or the Spanish accented speaker) will statistically report the speaker as less credible than participants in the control group (those who listened to the American Standard Accented speaker). Our second hypothesis is that participants in the experimental groups will rate the lecture as more difficult than participants in the control groups. Results will be analyzed using a one-way ANOVA test.

**Discussion**

We predict that the presence of an accent, either southern or foreign, will make speakers look less competent in the field. Previous research shows that accents can detriment speakers’ trustworthy for several reasons. According to Lev-Ari and Keysar (2010), the presence of an
accent (especially if it is a strong one) can make it more difficult for the listener to understand the message. In addition, according to Dahlbäck, Wang, Nass, and Alwin (2007), listeners tend to prefer and find more knowledgeable voices similar to their own. Moreover, Dixon, Mahony, and Cocks (2002) suggested that listeners tend to associate an accent with specific bias or prejudice against the speaker. Finally, McKlean (2007) explained that speakers, who have a different accent than their audience, usually have a harder time connecting with them because of the differences in background and past experiences.

Speakers’ potential loss of credibility due to the presence of an accent can have consequences for non-native speakers with accents who are trying to be successful in the marketplace. For this reason, it is imperative to enhance cultural and language diversity in our educational systems to prevent bias against accented speakers in the future. Exposing children to different English accents in elementary and middle school will help them get used to different accents and become more open minded towards non-native speakers. Promoting more tolerant citizens will prevent future prejudice and seclusion of accented speakers. Creating educational systems that will contribute to equal opportunities for all speakers is becoming particularly important as mobility increases in the modern world. Finally, a possible problem in this research will include unreliable self-report from participants on the survey to hide possible prejudice or bias against Hispanics or southern Americans. In addition, participants’ answers will be affected by their past experience and contact with people who speak with a southern or Spanish accent.
References


Appendix A

Biology Lecture Recording

Ecology is the science by which we study how organisms interact in and with the natural world. An ecological system may be an organism, a population, an assemblage of populations living together (often called a community), an ecosystem, or the entire biosphere. Each smaller ecosystem is a subset of the next larger one, so that the different types of ecological systems form a hierarchy. The organism is the most fundamental unit of ecology, the elemental ecological system. No smaller unit in biology, such as the organ, cell, or macromolecule, has a separate life in the environment. Every organism is bounded by a membrane or other covering across which it exchanges energy and materials with its environment. This boundary separates the internal processes and structures of the ecological system - in this case, an organism - from the external resources and conditions of the environment.

In the course of their lives, organisms transform energy and process materials. To accomplish this, organisms must acquire energy and nutrients from their surroundings and rid themselves of unwanted waste products. In doing so, they modify the conditions of the environment and the resources available for other organisms, and they contribute to energy fluxes and the cycling of chemical elements in the natural world. Assemblages of organisms together with their physical and chemical environments make up an ecosystem. Ecosystems are large and complex ecological systems, sometimes including many thousands of different kinds of organisms living in a great variety of individual surroundings. A warbler flitting among the leaves overhead searching for caterpillars and a bacterium decomposing the organic soil underfoot are both part of the same forest ecosystem. We may ask of a forest ecosystem, a prairie ecosystem, and an estuarine ecosystem as distinct units because relatively little energy
and few substances are exchanged between these units compared with the innumerable transformations going on within each of them. We can think of an ecosystem, like an organism, as having internal processes and exchange with the external surroundings. Thus, we can treat both orgasm and ecosystem as ecological systems.

Ultimately, all ecosystems are linked together in a single biosphere that includes all the environments and orgasms on earth. The far-flung parts of the biosphere are linked together by exchanges of energy and nutrients carried by currents of wind and water and by the movements of organisms. A river flowing from its headwaters to an estuary connects the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the watershed to those of the marine realm. The migrations of the gray whales link the ecosystems of the Bering Sea and the Gulf of California because feeding conditions in the Bering Sea influence the numbers of migrating whales and the number of young they produce on their calving grounds in the Gulf of California. The whale population, in turn, influences both marine ecosystems by consuming vast numbers of marine invertebrates and churning up marine sediments in search of prey. Energy and materials also move between different types of ecosystems within the biosphere, for example, when grizzly bears capture salmon migrating from the ocean to their spawning areas in rivers and lakes.

The biosphere is the ultimate ecological system. External to the biosphere, you will find only sunlight streaming toward the earth and the black coldness of space. Except for the energy arriving from the sun and the heat lost to the depths of space, all the transformations of the biosphere are internal. We have all the materials that we will ever have; our wastes have nowhere to go and must be recycled within the biosphere.

The concepts of ecosystems and the biosphere emphasize the transformation of energy and the synthesis and degradation materials-ecological systems as physical machines and
chemical laboratories. Another perspective emphasizes the uniquely biological properties of ecological systems that are embodied in populations. A population consists of many organisms of the same kind living together. Populations differ from organisms in that they are potentially immortal, since their numbers are maintained over time by the births of new individuals that replace those that die. Populations also have properties that are not exhibited by individual organisms. These distinctive properties include geographic ranges, densities (number of individuals per unit of area), and variations in size or composition. (for example, evolutionary responses to environmental change and periodic cycles of numbers).

Many populations of different kinds living in the same place make up an ecological community. The populations within a community interact in various ways. For example, many species are predators that eat other kinds of organisms; almost all species are themselves prey. Some, such as bees and the plants whose flowers they pollinate, and many microorganisms living together with the plants and animals, enter into cooperative interactions from which both parties benefit. All these interactions influence the numbers of individuals in populations. Unlike organisms, but like ecosystems, communities have no rigidity defined boundaries; no perceptible skin separates a community from what surrounds it. The interconnectedness of ecological systems means that interactions among populations spread across the globe as individuals and materials move between habitats and regions (Ricklefs, 2010).
Appendix B

Survey Regarding Biology Lecture

Age:

Sex: Female/Male

Class rank: freshman/sophomore/junior/senior

Please answer the following questions using the scale below with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

1. I easily understood the content of the lecture.

   1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
   Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree

2. The speaker was an expert in the field.

   1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
   Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Strongly Agree

3. The information was presented in a clear way.

   1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
   Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Strongly Agree

4. The lecturer was reliable.

   1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
   Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Strongly Agree

5. It was difficult to understand the speaker.

   1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
   Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Strongly Agree
6. The lecture was unorganized and difficult to follow.

1Strongly Disagree
2Somewhat Neutral Disagree
3Neutral Somewhat Agree
4Somewhat Strongly Agree
5Strongly Disagree

7. The lecturer was competent.

1Strongly Disagree
2Somewhat Neutral Disagree
3Neutral Somewhat Agree
4Somewhat Strongly Agree
5Strongly Disagree

8. The speaker provided interesting information.

1Strongly Disagree
2Somewhat Neutral Disagree
3Neutral Somewhat Agree
4Somewhat Strongly Agree
5Strongly Disagree

9. The speaker seemed trustworthy.

1Strongly Disagree
2Somewhat Neutral Disagree
3Neutral Somewhat Agree
4Somewhat Strongly Agree
5Strongly Disagree

10. I learned important information from this lecture.

1Strongly Disagree
2Somewhat Neutral Disagree
3Neutral Somewhat Agree
4Somewhat Strongly Agree
5Strongly Disagree
LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY
Human Subjects Research Review Committee
Committee Action Form

(To Be Completed By Researcher)

Proposal Title: The Effects of Accents on Speakers’ Credibility

Principal Investigator: Marta Pinyol Davi

(For Committee Use Only)

[ ] Meets the criteria for making research exempt from obtaining written informed consent and Committee review.

[ ] Approved by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

[ ] Approved with revisions by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee. The researcher(s) must provide a revised copy of the proposal to the Committee before commencing research.

[ ] Rejected by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

Date:_______________________

Signature of Committee (circle one) Member/Chair:____________________________________

Comments:
Longwood University Human and Animal Subjects Research Review Committee
Research Proposal Submission Form

I. Proposal

All Longwood University administration, faculty, and students conducting investigations involving human subjects, and all other researchers conducting investigations involving human subjects at Longwood University, must submit a research proposal to be reviewed and approved by the Human Subject Research Review Committee prior to the commencement of research. Research involving children should conform to the ethical standards found at http://www.srcd.org/ethicalstandards.html. Some types of human subjects research are exempt from the provisions of state and federal law, however, even research exempt from these provisions must be reviewed by the committee to determine that they are indeed exempt. Research proposals submitted to the committee must follow the protocols contained in this form and include the following information. Check those that are included.

[X] A description of the research, including:

1) A Title,
2) The purpose of the research, and
3) The methods or procedures to be employed including descriptions of:
   a) The human subjects and the criteria for including them in the research,
   b) What is to be done with or to them,
   c) Any possible risks, stress, or requests for information subjects might consider personal or sensitive, or which may be illegal, and whether or not the only risk to the subjects is the harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality,
   d) the steps that will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects,
   e) the permissions from other institutions, if required, that will be obtained.

[X] A signed, completed copy of this submission form.

In addition, the research proposal may have to include the following documents. Check those that are included.

[X] A copy of the test, survey, or questionnaire, if employed, and if it is not a standardized professional diagnostic tool otherwise specified in the proposal.

[X] A copy of the written statement explaining the research indicating that participation is voluntary, if required. (See III. A. below.)

[ ] A copy of what will be said to subjects before and after the research is conducted, if the methodology requires that the subjects be misled in any way. (See III. B.)

[X] A copy of the informed consent statement that will be used, if required. (See Sec. IV. below.) A model informed consent statement can be found at the end of this form.

II. Exemptions

If your research falls into any of the categories of research below, it is exempt from the requirement of obtaining written informed consent and being reviewed by the entire Committee, and only 1 copy of the proposal need be submitted. All others must submit 3 copies of their proposal. If your project conforms to any of the following descriptions, check those which apply:
Research or student learning outcomes assessments conducted in educational settings involving regular or special education instructional strategies, the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods, or the use of educational tests, whether cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement, if the data from such tests are recorded in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Research involving surveyor interview procedures unless responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

Research involving survey or interview procedures, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

Research involving solely the observation of public behavior, including observation by participants, unless observations are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject’s responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject’s financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject’s own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

### III. Special Types of Research

A. In addition to the above types of research that are exempt from the requirement to obtain written informed consent and full committee review, the committee may waive the requirement that the investigator obtain written informed consent for some or all subjects for the following type of research. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

Research in which the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.
In the forgoing type of research, the committee may require the investigator to provide the subjects with a written statement explaining the research and indicating that their participation is voluntary. In addition, each subject shall be asked whether s/he wants documentation linking him or her to the research, and the subject’s wishes shall govern. In the case that the subject agrees to be identified in the research, her or his written permission to do so shall be obtained by the researcher.

B. Some research methodologies may require that the subjects be initially misled regarding the purpose of the research, and so require that the consent procedure omit or alter some or all of the basic elements of informed consent, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

[ ] Research involves no more than "minimal risk" or risk of harm not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests, research could not practicably be performed without the omission, alteration or waiver, and the omission, alteration or waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

In the forgoing type of research, the committee requires the researcher to provide the subjects with an adequate post-investigative explanation of the purpose and methods of the research, or explanatory debriefing procedure to be undertaken immediately after the conclusion of each subject’s participation. The committee requires investigators undertaking this sort of research to furnish the committee with copies of the information that will be supplied to the subject before and after the investigation.

IV. Written Informed Consent

Research engaged in all other types of research must obtain written informed consent from the research subjects. Informed consent means the knowing and voluntary agreement, without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or other form of constraint or coercion, of a person who is capable of exercising free power of choice.

The basic elements of information necessary to such consent are:

- 1. A reasonable and comprehensible explanation to the person of the proposed procedures of protocols to be followed, their purposes, including descriptions of any attendant discomforts, and risks and benefits reasonably to be expected;

- 2. A disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures or therapies that might be advantageous for the person;

- 3. An instruction that the person may withdraw his consent and discontinue participation in the human research at any time without prejudice to her or him;

- 4. An explanation of any costs or compensation which may accrue to the person and, if applicable, the availability of third party reimbursement for the proposed procedures or protocols; and

- 5. An offer to answer and answers to any inquiries by the person concerning the procedures and protocols.
Informed consent must be obtained in the following manners for the following types of human subjects: (a) competent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person and witnessed; (b) not competent at the time consent is required, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person’s legally authorized representative and witnessed; or (c) a minor otherwise capable of rendering informed consent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by both the minor and her or his legally authorized representative.

Legally authorized representative means (a) the parent or parents having custody of a prospective subject, (b) the legal guardian of a prospective subject, or (c) any person or judicial or other body authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research.

Any person authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research shall include an attorney in fact appointed under a durable power of attorney, to the extent the power grants the authority to make such a decision. The attorney in fact shall not be employed by the person, institution, or agency conducting the human research. No official or employee of the institution or agency conducting or authorizing the research shall be qualified to act as a legally authorized representative.

A legally authorized representative may not consent to nontherapeutic research, or research in which there is no reasonable expectation of direct benefit to the physical or mental condition of the human subject, unless it is determined by the human subject research review committee that such research will present no more than a minor increase over minimal risk to the human subject.

Notwithstanding consent by a legally authorized representative, no person who is otherwise capable of rendering informed consent shall be forced to participate in any human research.

In the case of persons suffering from organic brain diseases causing progressive deterioration of cognition for which there is no known cure or medically accepted treatment, the implementation of experimental courses of therapeutic treatment to which a legally authorized representative has given informed consent shall not constitute the use of force.

No informed consent form shall include any language through which the person who is to be the human subject waives or appears to waive any of her or his legal rights, including any release of any individual, institution, or agency or any agents thereof from liability for negligence.

Human subject research investigators are responsible for obtaining written informed consent from research subjects in accordance with these specifications, and for obtaining permissions from any other institutions that may be involved in informed consent statement which conforms to these specifications.

The Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee must be informed of any violation or alteration of the research protocol. Continuing research projects must be re-approved annually.

The undersigned researcher(s) indicate that the information provided to the committee is accurate and true to the best knowledge of the researcher(s), and that the researcher(s) have conformed to the above guidelines to the best abilities of the researcher(s).

Date: ______________ Signed (legibly): ____________________________________

Date: ______________ Signed (legibly): ____________________________________

Date: ______________ Signed (legibly): ____________________________________

If this research is being completed in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree, the thesis committee must approve of your project prior to submission of these forms. The signature(s) of your committee chair/advisor on the appropriate form constitutes acknowledgement of this prior approval by your committee.

Please indicate the address where you would like the approval form sent (along with phone # and/or e-mail address):

__________________________________________
Further information of the status of proposals may be found at the following:

Dr. Eric Laws
Department of Psychology
Phone: (434)395-2841; e-mail: lawsel@longwood.edu
DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

Title of Research: The Effects of Accents on Speakers’ Credibility

- **Purpose of Research**: The goal of this research is to determine if the presence of an accent affects the credibility of speakers. The research is being conducted as a Research Methods research proposal, under the supervision of Dr. Stephanie Buchert.

- **Methods and Procedures**:
  
  - **Participants**: Participants will be Longwood University students who agree to voluntarily participate in the research. The purpose of the research will be explained to the students and they will be asked to participate with the provision that they are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
  
  - **Procedures**: Three speakers with different accents including a Standard English Accent, a Southern English Accent, and a Spanish Accent will make a recording in English of the same lecture. Speakers will have the same sex, similar age, and will talk in a similar pace. Researchers will randomly assign participants (through block randomization) to one of the three conditions. The content of the recording will consist of a collegiate level biology lecture and will last about 10 minutes. Researchers will play the recording through the classroom speakers for all participants of a certain group to listen at the same time. Then, researchers will ask participants to complete a survey. This survey will contain 10 statements designated to evaluate participants’ understanding of the content and speaker’s trustworthiness. Participants will rate each statement in a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (from 1 to 5). Researchers will use statements such, “I easily understood the content of the lecture” or “The information was presented in a clear way” to evaluate the participants’ understanding of the lecture. The survey will also include statements such as “The lecturer was reliable” or “The speaker was an expert in the field” to assess whether participants trusted the speaker.
  
  - **Possible Risks**: It is anticipated that participants will be at no physical, psychological, or emotional risk at any time during the research. Nor is it anticipated that participation in the research will place the participants at any risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the participants' financial standing or employability.
  
  - **Assurance of Anonymity and Confidentiality**: Participants will be informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research via instructions on the data collection instrument. Participants will also be instructed not to put their name or any identifying information on the instrument. When collecting data from participants, the researcher will immediately place the data in a large envelope, and will not examine any of the data until all data have been collected. Once collected, the raw data will only be accessible to Marta Pinyol Davi and Stephanie Buchert. In the event that any information provided by a participant should become known outside the research, it is unlikely that any harm would come to the participant.
Longwood University
Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research

I consent to participate in the research project entitled:

The Effects of Accents on Speakers’ Credibility

being conducted in the Department of Psychology by

Marta Pinyol Davi

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to discontinue participation in this project without penalty.

- I acknowledge that the general purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me.

- I acknowledge that I have the opportunity to obtain information regarding this research project, and that any questions I have will be answered to my full satisfaction.

- I understand that no information will be presented which will identify me as the subject of this study unless I give my permission in writing.

- I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me.

Name (Print): ____________________________________________

Date: ________________  Signed: _______________________

I understand that if I have concerns or complaints about my treatment in this study, I am encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood University at (434) 395-2010.