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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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AI Voice Cloning and Public Trust in News Anchors: Implications for Broadcast Journalism in Bangladesh

- Proposal Title : AI Voice Cloning and Public Trust in News Anchors: Implications for Broadcast Journalism in Bangladesh
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Introduction :

The digital media environment is changing rapidly now, as AI use continues to develop; and AI voice cloning (synthetic speech) presents a very personal challenge for journalistic identity. Voice cloning, which models the human voice at near-perfect fidelity, enables creation of persuasive audio deepfakes that challenge the distinction between real and synthesized speech [2]. It has been shown that the inability to distinguish synthetic from real data is a factor that substantially reduces the trust in information sources and their credibility [5]

Bangladesh, with its heavy dependence on broadcast journalism and the public's old-school faith in individual news anchors, is particularly at risk. Nevertheless, despite the worldwide insecurity, we find a paucity of local empirical studies addressing the intersection between AI voice cloning and audience trust and ethical approval. This will be the first locally derived evidence for how authenticity of familiar voices are being processed by Bangladeshi audiences and can also preemptively address the ethical-legal dilemmas before AI-generated mis-information becomes prevalent.

The Local Gap & Necessity:

Bangladesh, with its heavy dependence on broadcast journalism and the public's trust in individual news presenters, is particularly susceptible to these social implications of this medium. Nevertheless, in face of the increasingly global risks, little empirical research exists locally to measure how AI voice cloning will affect audience trust and ethical acceptance. This research is, therefore, motivated to be the first local report on how authentic a familiar voice (from Bangladesh) sounds in the ears of Bangladeshi listeners and to address any ethical or regulatory response needed before disinformation driven by AI is widely available.

Research Questions:

This proposal is driven by a central, specific, and empirically testable question:

To what extent does the use of AI voice cloning of news anchors affect the public trust, perceived credibility, and ethical acceptance of broadcast journalism among Bangladeshi audiences?

Following are the specific research questions to be addressed:

I. To what degree can Bangladeshi news consumers reliably distinguish between a familiar news anchor's original voice and their AI-cloned voice?

II. How does the manipulation of a news anchor's voice (human vs. AI clone) impact the audience's perceived credibility, sincerity, and trustworthiness of the news message?

III. What are the key ethical, professional, and policy concerns regarding the adoption of AI voice technology as perceived by Bangladeshi journalists, media professionals, and policy stakeholders?

Literature Review:

The present study is theoretically based on two theories: **Source Credibility Theory (SCT)** (Hovland et al., 1953), involving characteristics of the source [expertise, trustworthiness] and **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** (Davis, 1989), measuring user intention to use new technology.

The historical development of these technologies and their effects on society has been reviewed extensively in the existing literature:

- **Perceptual Challenge:** Recent research has shown that AI-made voices are reaching a place of "hyper realism," a level at which listeners not only cannot distinguish them from human speech, but also - in some cases - judge the computer voice to be more dominant or (paradoxically) more trustworthy (PLOS One, 2025).

- **Trust Deficit:** Studies carried out at several institutions show a direct negative relationship: when the public is made aware of AI in creating news, they trust the news less and have lower confidence in the author, even when they do not fully understand what role AI plays (University of Kansas, 2024).

- **Ethical and Legal Lacunae:** The consensus that emerged during the discussion is primarily on consent/dis/ownership of voice as IP, and potential for fraud proliferation in high-stakes situations (Kits. AI, 2025).

Existing work establishes the worldwide hazards, this research addresses a crucial contextual void by measuring these effects empirically with regard to authenticity perceptions of their own within a trusted local news culture.

Proposed Methodology:

The method is a **Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Method Method** suitable for high internal and external validity.

1. **Data Collection and Pre-processing (Phase I: Quantitative Experiment)**

- **Design:** We will use a 2 (Voice Type: Human or AI Clone) x 2 (News Content: Factual or Emotional) between-participants factorial design.

- **Stimulus Development:** Two newspaper articles (a high fact and an emotionally engaging human interest) will be read by a locally popular Bangladeshi news announcer. The synthetic version of the anchor's voice will be synthesized using high-fidelity AI voice cloning software.

- **Participants:** A purposive (to an extent) and quota sample of **300 Bangladeshi news consumers** will be drawn from varying age and education ranges.

- **Method:** Subjects will be randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Following the segment, they will be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

2. **Statistical Accuracy Assessment (Quantitative Analysis)**

- **Analysis:** Numbers will be analyses using **IBM SPSS.**

- **Tests:** The main and interaction effects of Voice Type and Content on the dependent variables (Trustworthiness, Credibility, Sincerity) will be verified with ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). The perceptual accuracy (attention to AI) will be quantified using descriptive statistics.

- **Metric:** It is to be observed if the mean values of the perceived credibility differ for voice cloning with AI and non-cloning, and whether emotional content reinforces possible differences.

3. **Qualitative Data Collection and Thematic Analysis**

- **Design (Phase 2): In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** will be conducted with 20 purposive sampled key informants, comprising 5 headline news editors / presenters, 5 media regulatory/policy specialists and 10 community members selected from the Phase-1 pool demonstrating high ethical concern.

- **Objective:** Delve more deeply into the "whys" of the quantitative findings—namely, ethical issues, feelings of "eeriness," and desired transparency processes.

- **Analysis:** Interview transcripts will be analyses through the process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to systematically uncover, analyse and report patterns of meaning relating to the themes of AI, ethics and media policy.

Expected Outcomes:

The research is anticipated to generate an in-depth understanding of public reception of AI voice cloning in Bangladesh and produce a number of deliverable.

a. **Empirical Contribution:** Measurable information of the hyperplane AI voices in local language and the trust deficit.

b. **Theoretical Contribution:** To validate or refine Source Credibility and TAM models in the single case of synthetic voices with a certain cultural background.

c. **Practical implications:** Recommendations for broadcast management, such as mandatory AI disclosure policies and moral guidelines for anchors and voice actors.

Potential Limitation:
The constraints may be in the availability of a precise AI cloning software, as it is likely that technology progress will bring to an improved performance by the 10 months duration of the project. But the study focus is still audience perception which perhaps becomes more interesting.

Conclusion:
It is significant in that it can provide an empirical anchor to the ongoing global debate around AI voice clones, using the case of Bangladeshi broadcast journalism. The results will be an important factor for the future of media ethics, control and maintenance of the public confidence in the country.

Project Practicalities:
Work on the project is planned to last for 10 months. The first three months will be allocated to development of the stimuli, ethical approval and recruitment. Spending on record period 4-months for the collection of data (Experiment and Interviews). The last 3 months will be allocated to data analysis and final report preparation.

Post-program Plan:
Following the research and final report, results will be disseminated through presentation at national and international academic conferences, as well as peer-reviewed publication in a journal.

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