《傳播與社會學刊》年度雙語論文

政壇無小節：
政治糗聞在總統選舉報道中的角色分析

周樹華、Lindsey Conlin Maxwell、Yeojin Kim、單舟

摘要

　　政治人物的一言一行皆受到公眾的嚴格審視，尤其在角逐政壇的關鍵時刻，小糗事也會成為大新聞，對其公眾形象以至政治生涯產生重大影響。本研究首先對政治糗聞進行闡釋和分類，並探討其在政治活動中扮演的角色，繼而以「期望違背」理論（expectancy violation theory）為應用框架，在大眾傳播的語境中，考察影響政治糗聞之所以成為重大新聞的因素。本文以四屆美國總統競選中的新聞報道為對象，通過內容分析法來檢驗本文對政治糗聞之分類法的嚴謹程度，考察政客的個體特質與當時的政治氣候如何影響政治糗聞的報道方式。結果表明，新候選人較容易犯「敘述失當型」糗聞、「金斯利糗聞」和「事實錯誤型」糗聞。政治糗聞的報道也反映出總統大選的「賽馬式」競逐本質。

關鍵詞：政治糗聞、偏差、政治形象、期望違背、總統競選

周樹華，阿拉巴馬大學傳播與信息學院新聞與創意媒體教授。研究興趣：媒體內容、形式和效果。電郵：szhou@ua.edu

Lindsey Conlin Maxwell，南密西西比大學大眾傳播與新聞系助理教授。研究興趣：技術帶來的傳播變化。電郵：Lindsey.Conlin@usm.edu

Yeojin Kim，康涅狄格州中央州立大學傳播系助理教授。研究興趣：新媒體和戰略傳播。電郵：yeojinkim@ccsu.edu

單舟，阿拉巴馬大學傳播與信息學院博士生。研究興趣：媒體對個人和社會的效果。電郵：zshan2@crimson.ua.edu

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More than a Mistake: The Role of Political Gaffes in U.S. Presidential Election Coverage

Shuhua ZHOU, Lindsey Conlin MAXWELL, Yeojin KIM, Zhou SHAN

Abstract

Small mistakes on the part of a politician can become huge media stories when these politicians are running for prominent office, as every movement and action of these public figures is scrutinized. The current study proposes an explanation and typology of political gaffes, and examines their role in the political process. Expectancy violation theory is applied in a mass communication context to understand how the temporary missteps of a politician can become huge news stories. Newspaper coverage of four U.S. presidential elections was content analyzed in order to determine whether the proposed typology was appropriate, as well as characteristics of the politician

Shuhua ZHOU (Professor). Department of Journalism and Creative Media, College of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Alabama. Research interests: media content, processes and effects, and media psychology.

Lindsey Conlin MAXWELL (Assistant Professor). School of Mass Communications and Journalism, University of Southern Mississippi. Research interest: communication changes as a result of technology.

Yeojin KIM (Assistant Professor). Department of Communication, Central Connecticut State University. Research interests: new media, strategic communication.

Zhou SHAN (PhD candidtate). College of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Alabama. Research interest: media effects on society and individuals.

and political climate that play a role in how political gaffes are covered. Results indicated that new candidates were more likely that incumbents to commit narrative gaffes, Kinsley gaffes and factural error gaffes, and that coverage of political gaffes was used to emphasize the horse-race nature of presidential elections.

Keywords: political gaffe, deviance, political image, expectancy violation, presidential election

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　　當今政治競選與政客活動經常聚焦於新聞閃光燈下，重要人物的言行談笑，皆成為媒體關注的焦點和大眾審視的對象，任何細枝末節都有可能演繹成為大新聞。譬如在 2015 年 12 月的一場選舉辯論中，自帶吸睛體質的共和黨候選人唐納德‧特朗普顯然不知「戰略核三角」為何物，卻在迴避該問題的時候遭到追問，他答道：「在我看來，對我而言，核（武器）就是力量，其毀滅性對我來說非常重要」（Berney, 2015）。這一蒙混過關的回答頓時在各大媒體上沸反盈天。無獨有偶，民主黨的領軍人物希拉里‧克林頓也曾當眾出糗。她承諾將禁止僱主強迫對應聘者需申報犯罪記錄的要求，以此幫助有犯罪前科的人增加就業機會。她說：「我將採取措施取消犯罪資料選框，這樣，前總統在招聘開始時就不用申報其犯罪歷史了」（Davis, 2015）。這顯然是她的口誤，將「前犯人」（ex-prisoner）說成了「前總統」（ex-president）。口誤本乃尋常事，但鑒於美國歷屆前總統都無須「再就業」，唯有她的丈夫比爾‧克林頓曾被眾議院彈劾而險失總統寶座。這一口誤與她微妙的政治處境相聯，一時難免為坊間津津樂道。類似這種政客們言行中犯的小錯誤通常被稱為政治糗聞（political gaffes）（Amira, 2012; Bennett, 1981; Chait, 2012; Linkins, 2012; Obeidallah, 2012; Vicary, 2012），而關乎這些糗事的新聞報道則可能把一件無足輕重的小事搞得寰宇皆知。尤其在社交媒體中，小小糗聞足以演變為被瘋狂傳播的病毒視頻或模因（meme），成為社交媒體中的「爆款」（Vicary, 2012）。因此，政治糗聞儼然在當今美國政壇佔據了中心位置（Amira, 2012）。

　　一個現成的例子發生在 2004 年美國總統候選人霍華德‧迪安（Howard Dean）身上。2004 年總統大選期間，風頭正勁的迪安本有望角逐總統寶座，卻在愛荷華州黨團會議上突然發出怪叫。這一幕在互聯網、當地電視台及 24 小時有線新聞網上迅速傳播（Kaiser, 2012），政治明星頓時淪為笑柄。瞬間的失態或失誤不能代表迪恩的政策、個性，或其他任何相關的政治問題，卻讓他與白宮失之交臂（Kaiser, 2012）。現代媒體觀察員就此指出，即使一般政治愛好者不願承認小糗聞足以撬動大事件，但事實卻一再表明，政治糗聞的確塑造了選民對政客的看法；在這件事情上，真理掌握在了少數派的手中：政治糗聞至關重要（Cillizza, 2012）。

然而，過往傳播學對異常性政治問題的研究卻主要集中在政治醜聞上，缺乏對政治糗事的透徹探討及類型劃分。醜聞與糗聞不同：道德問題往往與前者形影不離，卻與後者全無關係。鑒於對政治糗聞的研究之匱乏，本文整合了多個領域的研究成果，包括：人際關係研究領域通常援引「期望違背」理論來解釋糗事的起源及潛在影響；新聞領域對偏差的研究揭示了糗事的潛在新聞價值；政治科學研究則闡明了糗事如何損害政客精心樹立的政治形象。綜合這些領域的研究成果，本研究將對政治糗聞作出定義與分類，並通過一個綜合性的、歷時性的內容分析，考察大眾媒體如何報道四屆美國競選中的政治糗聞。

政治糗聞

糗事是指造成社交尷尬局面的、瞬間或暫時的小失誤（失言或失態等）。政治糗事則是指因為政客或候選人做出出乎意料、不符合場合，或政治不正確的言語或行為。早期關於糗事的研究（Gonzales, Pederson, Manning, & Wetter, 1990）集中在當面互動的溝通情境中，認為如果「社交規範或基於角色的期望被違背，或有意無意間不合時宜的行為被發生時」，便可被視為糗事或有損顏面的行為（Gonzales et al., 1990, p. 610）。此類的研究主要關注糗事發生之後的人際互動（Gonzales et al., 1990; Gonzales, Kovera, Sullivan, & Chanley, 1995）。儘管「出糗」帶有不言而喻的負面性社會效果（Jones & Davis, 1965），即如果一個人當面出糗，見證者「可能會對規範冒犯者（即出糗人）的社會身份產生負面評價，進而做出一系列負面推斷」（Gonzales et al., 1990, p. 611）。但個人糗事的人際傳播維度與政治糗事的大眾傳播維度卻殊為不同——前者發生在兩個人之間（或小群體之間），後者則發生在大眾眼前，並塑造了公眾輿論。例如，在2012年的總統選舉中，候選人米特·羅姆尼（Mitt Romney）在一次不公開的募捐會上表示，美國有47%的非納稅公民堅信自己是資本化的受害者，因而理直氣壯地指望政府。奧巴馬的政策剛好迎合了這一部分選民，而「我並不指望能說服這些人為自己的人生負責，我的工作是說服在座的各位——佔美國人口5%–10%的各

位——你們有獨立的生活和獨立的思想,能夠支持我和我的團隊,讓我們制定政策,為人民創造機會,讓他們依靠自己而非寄生於政府」。這段本是在私人場合發表的演講被秘密錄下,並被洩露給媒體,進而在互聯網上廣泛傳播。由此,一個私人行為被置入公開傳播的場景之中。看過該視頻的觀眾認為,羅姆尼的失言意味著他根本無意體察民眾之冷暖(Good, 2013)。故而,Bennett(1981)認為,政治糗聞的傳播過程有兩層含義:

> 首先,當糗聞被定義在領導力和民主問責制的範疇內時,它就成為了競選問題。在這一層面上,任何單一的意外都有可能成為一種與政治規範有關的符號。而在第二層面,糗聞結果則進一步演化生成了對意外事件的信息,進而成為對該候選人進行實際評判的基礎(Bennett, 1981, p. 312)。

由此可見,政治糗聞不僅僅意味著簡單的錯誤,而是不管公允與否,它的發生都會導致出糗的政治候選人及政治進程本身遭致評判定案。

區分政治糗聞與其他政治現象(如政治醜聞)的重要特徵是,糗聞涉及的事件相對較微小,不代表任何道德或倫理問題,也反映不了出糗人的總體個性或政治立場。說起某一特定事件時,一位政治觀察家表示:「這個插曲是一件完美的糗事,恰恰因其如此無聊」(Chait, 2012, para. 5)。微不足道的糗聞何以成為新聞焦點,乃至攪動政治風雲?這正是研究政治糗聞的意義所在。

首先,正因為當前瞬間、微小的糗事都能使得政客「平地起波瀾」,瞭解可能發生的不同類型的糗聞故而顯得尤為重要。政治糗事可能作為病毒視頻通過傳統媒體渠道和社交媒體「無腳走萬家」。過去,傳統媒體也許沒有時間報道微小的糗事(Cillizza, 2012),然而在社交媒體盛行的今天,曾經被忽視的問題,一旦傳遍 YouTube 或 Twitter 等社交媒體,傳統媒體和政客們都必須嚴正以待了。

此外,糗聞有可能成為重大新聞的原因還在於政治競選的節奏和大眾傳播的速度。這並非意指在病毒視頻主導政治世界之前的時代,某個意外事件就不會發酵成為政治糗聞(Chait, 2012)。實際上,當紙媒

和三大電視網有意聯手時，傳統媒體通過議程設置，將意外事件「翻雲覆雨」為政治糗聞的能力可能比社交媒體有過之而無不及 (Chait, 2012)。只是在過去，記者和新聞製作人用於新聞採寫和播報的時間和資源都較為有限，即使他們意識到政治糗聞與政治進程的關聯以及公眾對此類新聞的興趣，也不會如社交媒體一般，動用專門的媒體資源大肆傳播。

現代政治觀察家指出，普通市民並不滿意糗聞在政治進程中扮演的角色 (Linkins, 2012)。選民不僅對小小糗聞竟能成為重大政治問題而感到失望，有些人還否認糗聞的重要性，並聲稱此類瑕疵對政治格局無關緊要 (Linkins, 2012)。而一些更為精明的政治觀察家則認為，否認糗聞的重要性等於無視現代媒體的力量——它們無處不在，能把細枝末節的評論放大成舉國皆知的頭條新聞 (Cillizza, 2012)。這並非表示，糗事本不應該扮演如此重要的角色，學術研究更應著眼於理想的政治角色形態；而是指當前的政治氣候下，漠視糗事之重要性即意味著忽略了當今政治進程中一個不可分割的問題：選民會根據他們在媒體中看到的內容作出政治決定。因此，當政治糗聞日益成為媒體報道中不容忽視的重大事件時，它們便很難被「當作失意媒體與無聊公眾茶餘飯後的談話資料而遭忽略」(Bennett, 1981, p. 310)。

另一方面，作為政治進程的一部分，政客們苦心孤詣地打造公眾形象，通常被稱為「形象政治」(Gackowski, 2013)。政客的媒體呈現是其競選活動的核心，蓋因「政治傳播的實質是傳播形象——由媒介呈現的形象」(Gackowski, 2013, p. 52)。政治形象不僅由個人的觀點及行為構成，還關乎他們的外表 (Rosenberg, Kahn, & Tran, 1991)。由於「在電視政治時代，前所未有的注意力都被投諸於政治候選人所塑造的形象、以及這一形象對選舉結果產生的影響上」(Rosenberg et al., 1991, p. 345)，政治形象對政客的成功至關重要。

因此，政治候選人樹立的形象或許並非其實際性格或個性的真實反映。但這些經過修飾的形象專為大眾媒介定制，不容有差，一旦出現任何偏差，糗聞便接踵而至。更何況在重大選舉中，政客呈現給公眾的形象應是普羅大眾期望候選人所維持的形象。「候選人被賦予充分自由來設計他們的人格面貌，但是他們也要忠於這個形象，並為此負

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責」(Bennett, 1981, p. 312)。故而政客們需要為其自身形象負責，破壞形象的糗聞就不再微不足道；一旦其行為與塑造的形象出現些微偏差，觀眾就會進而質疑政客其他各方面的表現。總之，當糗聞撕裂了政治候選人精心打造的形象時，對其政治競選的打擊便有可能是致命的 (Kaiser, 2012)。

異常性與政治糗聞的新聞價值

新聞中之所以有「異常性」這一概念，主要基於一個前提，即當事件偏離了正常的或普遍接受的社會規範時，它便具有了新聞價值 (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997; Shoemaker, Chang, & Brendlinger, 1987; Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991)。而異常性就正是事件與正常狀態偏差或背離的程度。因此，從定義上看，糗聞是對預期的偏離，因而是有新聞價值的。並且異常性的事件往往也是發生率比較低的事件——而糗聞正是如此，它們在政客預先規劃、精心準備的日程和形象之外，代表了對政治規範和政客們想要努力保持的完美形象的偏離，這正是糗事的新聞價值之所在 (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997)。

以往對新聞價值中異常性的研究將其分為三類：規範異常性 (normative deviance)、統計異常性 (statistical deviance) 以及可能造成社會改變的異常性 (potential for social change deviance) (Pritchard & Hughes 1997; Shoemaker et al., 1987; Shoemaker et al., 1991)。政治糗聞與規範異常性相關，涉及到「行為違背正式規範的程度」(Pritchard & Hughes 1997, p. 51)，換言之，政治糗聞往往是違反了政治活動、尤其是政客政治形象的普遍規則，與政治相聯的特性，使得政治糗聞兼具異常性與重要性的特徵，因而往往容易受到媒體的高度關注 (Shoemaker et al., 1991)。這無疑解釋了為何政治新聞總是給予糗聞大量篇幅的報道與關注。原本來說，政客應當遵循的普遍規範是維持良好形象，表達政治正確的觀點，並且為所屬黨派的意識形態代言。這些都是 Pritchard 和 Hughes (1997) 提到的「正式規範」，而任何對此規範的改變都可以視為規範異常性。

此外，異常性也可以解釋為何選民會用他們從糗聞中獲得的信息做出政治決定。異常事件通常比正常事件受到更深入的認知加工，進而也會引發更為深刻的記憶（Shoemaker et al., 1991）。這意味著，糗聞與正常事件相比，具有更大的認知優勢。另外，政治競選和政治事件還可能反過來被競選期間發生的糗聞（或糗聞的缺失）所定義。要是總統辯論期間並未發生任何糗聞，則會被媒體形容為乏善可陳或寡然無味。

作為期望違背的糗聞

當政客偏離了社會規範糗聞纏身時，他／她就違背了其背負的期望。期望違背理論（expectancy violations theory）可以部分解釋偏離規範的危害。該理論探討的是，在交流過程中，當期望被違背時，信息接受者會對期望違背人作出（正面或負面）判斷（Burgoon & Hale 1988; Afifi & Burgoon, 2000）。在這種情況下，糗聞是一種違背期望的行為。期望違背理論主要涉及兩個概念：期望與違背（Burgoon, 1993）。期望是個人期待其交流對象遵從的社會規範，或「一種預期行為的持久模式」（Burgoon, 1993, p. 31）。違背即偏離預期的行為（Burgoon, 1993）。因此，當交流的一方在言語或行為上偏離了預期規範、導致某種社交尷尬或意外時，期望違背現象就產生了（Burgoon, 1993）。

就糗聞而言，公眾期望政客能維持良好的政治身份，即通過只談論那些由顧問和幕僚安排好的、政治正確的意見和政策，來維持一個良好的政治公眾形象。而糗聞的出現使得政客們偏離了這一政治形象，違背了公眾的期望。根據期望違背理論，由於期望的背離，公眾會對陷入糗聞的政客作出負面評價（Burgoon, 1993）。

Afifi 和 Burgoon（2000）確認了兩類期望違背的情況：一致性違背和不一致性違背。一致性違背是「對此前的情感、信息、立場的提高和強化」（Afifi & Burgoon 2000, p. 208）。不一致性違背則恰恰相反，表現為對某人過往表現進行否定。我們可以把期望與違背的範圍想像成一個波譜，一致行為在一端，預期行為在中間，而不一致行為在另一端（Afifi & Burgoon, 2000）。另外，一致的違背讓人更容易對違背之人做

出判斷（Afifi & Burgoon, 2000）。就政治糗聞而言，糗聞的效果可能類同於「甲之熊掌，乙之砒霜」，或能產生負面反應，或能強化公眾之前的信念，換言之，有人眼中的「糗聞」，在他者眼裡，反倒是政客特徵的正向強化。

糗聞的類型

然而，隨著糗聞在政治舞台上的重要性不斷增加，對政治糗聞的研究卻一直比較零散。為此，本研究的目的是對政治糗聞進行歸類，並明確在政治競選新聞中，這些不同糗聞類型之間的關係。由於除一致性違背和不一致性違背外，糗聞還可能以與大眾傳播相關的特定方式反覆發生。政治糗聞和政治傳播的複雜本質，使得單個糗聞可能符合不止一個類型。我們通過半歸納的研究，對大眾媒體（Amira, 2012），和既有研究中的糗聞進行了歸類。現將其詳述並整合如下：

斷章取義型糗聞：這類糗聞是指脫離政客言論或行為的具體語境而造成的誤讀（Amira, 2012; Reston, 2012）。這類糗聞中的言論本該是另一番意思，卻被公眾曲解。譬如2012年，美國總統候選人羅姆尼宣稱他喜歡擁有解僱人的權利（Madison, 2012）。這番話本來是在一個談論自由市場的語境下，意指自由市場能夠通過激勵機制來獎勤罰懶，然而關於解僱他人的言辭卻被單獨拎出來，凸顯出羅姆尼個人的冷漠無情和對當前經濟形式的視而不見（Reston, 2012）。

敘述失當型糗聞：當政客的言行正中反對派營造的負面敘述，便造成敘述失當型糗聞（Amira, 2012）。比如，時任聯邦參議員的奧巴馬曾說自己希望「財富均分」（Gewargis, 2008, para. 17），這就「坐實」了反對者說他持有社會主義觀點的指控。敘述失當型糗聞為印證反對派對糗聞者的負面描述提供了素材。

事實錯誤型糗聞：此類糗聞是指政客發表的言論明顯錯誤或完全失實（Amira, 2012）。事實錯誤型糗聞通常發生在政客不知道自己所言失時的情況下。譬如薩拉‧佩林（Sarah Palin）聲稱，保羅‧里維爾（Paul Revere）曾警告英國人，宣稱他們無法將槍從美國人手裡奪走（Malcolm,

2011）。佩林的此番言論錯得離譜，彰顯出她自身的愚蠢與對史實知識的匱乏。

金斯利（Kinsley）糗聞：這是一種更為普遍的糗聞。它由記者邁克爾‧金斯利（Michael Kinsley）發現，並由此而得名，意指「政客說了不該說的真話」。金斯利糗聞適用於政客道出他自認為的真理、卻未必是真理的「真話」之行為（Chait, 2012）。例如，前美國副總統喬‧拜登（Joe Biden）在2014年曾說，美國社會自2008年以來希望渺茫，改變不大；而「希望」和「改變」恰恰是2008年奧巴馬與拜登陣營對選民最重要的承諾（Whittington, 2014）。此番言論表明拜登認為他並未實現競選時的諾言。他表達了一個自認為的真理，卻與奧巴馬政府立場相左，故而屬失當的真話。

「話筒門」糗聞：當政客講話時被錄音卻毫不知情時，「話筒門」糗聞就發生了（Amira, 2012; Obeidallah, 2012; Stephy, 2012）。最著名的例子發生於1984年，美國前總統羅納德‧里根（Ronald Reagan）在錄製一次廣播演講時，一邊測試話筒一邊開玩笑說「我們將在5分鐘後開始轟炸蘇聯」，未料當時話筒沒關，玩笑被實時播放了出去。儘管在場的媒體和他的助手們都哄堂大笑，表明這僅僅是一句玩笑，但實時傳送出去的信號卻引發了反對派人士的恐慌，同時也造成了冷戰期間的國際糾紛。而這一事件成為「話筒門」糗聞中被頻繁提起的典型案例（Stephy, 2012）。

肢體表現類糗聞：這或許是最微不足道的一類糗聞，由諸如絆倒或發出怪聲等肢體上的失態引起，還包括怪異的面部表情、儀式中的一時走神等。具體事例有終結了前述霍華德‧迪安政治生涯的2004年愛荷華州黨團會議後的怪叫（Kaiser, 2012），還有同年古巴前領導人菲德爾‧卡斯特羅（Fidel Castro）在觀眾前的跌倒（Newman & Labott, 2004）等等，其中亦不乏政治出糗者在禮節上的失禮行為。

研究問題

本研究的總體目的不僅為了明晰糗聞類型，還試圖更好地瞭解新聞媒體報道政治糗聞的方式，從而驗證上述糗聞分類法的準確性。為

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了評估政治糗聞的媒體呈現方式，此研究對政治糗聞的報道特點進行了內容分析。其中，報道特點主要是指報道的傾向（如報道語氣、報道立場）；糗聞主要是指糗聞的類型、所屬黨派等。由於不同類型的政治糗聞各有特點，有的可能被認為更重要、更有趣或更具有新聞價值，由此它們被新聞機構報道的方式也會隨之不同。因此，我們提出以下研究問題：

研究問題一：甚麼類型的政治糗聞在新聞報道中最常見？

研究問題二：不同類型的報紙（地方、國家、國際）如何報道政治糗聞？

研究問題三：政治糗聞的類型和新聞文章的特點之間有甚麼關係？

由於在位者和新晉候選人之間存在政治經驗層級上的差異，不同類別的政客可能會有不同類型的糗聞。此外，候選人的黨派也可能影響新聞媒體報道政治糗聞的方式。因此，我們繼而提出下列研究問題：

研究問題四：依據候選人的不同身份，甚麼類型的政治糗聞最普遍？

研究問題五：依據候選人的不同黨派，甚麼類型的政治糗聞最普遍？

根據期望違背理論，在溝通中任何對預期規範的違背都會導致糗聞。在大眾傳播裡，政客的任何糗聞——或期望違背——既可以是一致性違背，也可以是不一致性違背（Affifi & Burgoon, 2000）。一致性糗聞指的是強化候選人極端信念或立場的偏離行為，而不一致性糗聞指的是與預期相反的言論或行為（Affifi & Burgoon, 2000）。由於糗聞的違背類型可能導致新聞媒體的不同報道——相比而言，一致性糗聞不會太讓人感到震驚或意外，而不一致性糗聞則被視為石破天驚——因此我們提出以下研究問題：

研究問題六：政治糗聞的類型和一致性存在甚麼關係？

研究問題七：政治糗聞的一致性與文章特點存在甚麼關係？

方法

總體與樣本

為了解答以上研究問題，我們對四屆美國總統選舉中的12位總統和副總統候選人的報刊報道文章進行了內容分析。此研究的目標總體是4個選舉週期內（即從2000年至2012年）所有報道兩大黨派的美國總統和副總統候選人的政治糗聞的報刊文章。一共有12位總統和副總統候選人被選作為報道對象，分別為：艾伯特‧戈爾、喬‧利伯曼、喬治‧W‧布什、迪克‧切尼、約翰‧克里、約翰‧愛德華、巴拉克‧奧巴馬、喬‧拜登、約翰‧麥凱恩、薩拉‧佩林、米特‧羅姆尼，以及保羅‧瑞恩。分析單位是樣本中報道各個候選人所犯的政治糗聞的每一篇報刊文章。

為了在較長的時間跨度裡獲取競選報道的詳細記錄，報刊文章被選為研究對象，因為電視或其他大眾媒體的內容無法滿足這個要求。研究者收集了美國國內及國外報刊對候選人政治事務的報道。選舉週期為大選前兩年，比如2010年11月至2012年11月之間的報道便是2012年的選舉素材。以此來確保整個選舉週期、甚至初選活動，都能被納入分析之列。在電子數據庫Lexis-Nexis中搜索12個關鍵詞（每位候選人的名字加「糗聞」，比如奧巴馬糗聞，或羅姆尼糗聞）獲取相關報道文章，然後排除與政治糗聞無關或涉及不止一個政治糗聞的文章（這類文章通常是對「糗聞大師喬‧拜登」的概述而非對個別糗聞的報道）。此外，稱某一候選人「容易出糗」而不討論具體事件的文章也被排除。最終有177篇報道被選為分析對象。

編碼表

報刊類型：報刊類型以發表報道的報刊所在地為依據，劃分為三類——當地、國內（美國境內）或國際（美國境外）報刊。

報道特點：報道特點被分為三個子類——文章基調、報道立場和支持出糗人的理由。這一分類是為了分析報刊是否因自身和/或出糗者

的政治傾向而有迥異的處理方式。雖然本文並未過多引述對政治新聞偏頗報道的文獻（見Rosenstiel et al., 2012），我們力圖解析報道的偏向問題。文章基調是指該文章報道某位政治家或泛談政治的語氣，分為正面、平衡或負面。一篇文章如果對政治或政治家表示懷疑或不屑的傾向則被編碼為負面基調；抱持積極態度則被編碼為正面基調；如持模棱兩可或模糊的態度，則被編碼為平衡基調。需要需要特別說明的是，只有指向明顯的情況下，正面基調才會被慎重編碼。

報道立場：指意在衡量報刊文章如何談論糗聞者，分為支持，中立或不支持三類。如果文章顯示出對該人物的支持，則被編碼為支持。支持出糗人的理由這一變量意在測量報刊文章是否試圖解釋或合理化糗聞發生的原因，分是或否兩類。如果一篇文章嘗試解釋或合理化糗聞發生的原因，則被編碼為是。

候選人身份：根據糗聞發生時，出糗者的競選人身份（而非政治身份）劃分為在位者或候選人。比如，如果事件主角當時是以州長身份競選總統，則被編碼為候選人。

候選人黨派：依據糗聞發生時，出糗者所屬的黨派，分為民主黨和共和黨。

政治糗聞類型：根據文獻綜述部分劃定的政治糗聞的類型和定義，分為六類——斷章取義型糗聞、敘述失當型糗聞、事實錯誤型糗聞、金斯利糗聞、「話筒門」糗聞和肢體表現類糗聞。該變量以「0」或「1」形式編碼，表示各個類型糗聞的期望違背類型：根據Afifi和Burgoon（2000）對一致／不一致違背的定義，政治糗聞還被分類為一致性糗聞或不一致性糗聞。如果糗聞是對期望的強化表現就被編碼為一致性糗聞；如果糗聞與期望對立，則被編碼為不一致性糗聞。

編碼員訓練與編碼員間信度

在測試編碼員間信度之前，研究者先對兩位研究生編碼員進行了多次培訓，使其理解編碼的類別和過程。兩位編碼員各自對27篇（15%的樣本量）報刊文章進行編碼，其總體平均信度的Cohen's Kappa係數

為 .92範圍在 .69至1.00之間，具體變量的信度如下：報刊類型為 1.00；文章特徵（文章基調為 .83，報道立場為 .82，支持出糗人的理由 為 1.00）；候選人身份為 .92；候選人黨派為 1.00；政治糗聞類型（斷章 取義型糗聞為 .78，敘述失當型糗聞為 .69，其餘各類型糗聞均為 1.00）；以及糗聞的期望違背類型為 1.00。

結果

研究問題一討論的是最常見的政治糗聞類型。如表一所示，描述 性統計數據顯示了樣本中不同糗聞類型出現的頻率。顯然，最普遍的 類型依次為敘述失當型糗聞、金斯利糗聞、事實錯誤型糗聞和「話筒 門」糗聞，而斷章取義型糗聞和肢體表現類糗聞則最不常見。

表一　政治糗聞類型

	總數 (%)	
斷章取義型糗聞	10	(5.6%)
敘述失當型糗聞	116	(65.5%)
事實錯誤型糗聞	49	(27.7%)
金斯利糗聞	96	(54.2%)
話筒門糗聞	45	(25.4%)
肢體表現類糗聞	1	(0.6%)

註：對糗聞進行非互斥編碼

研究問題二探索不同類型的報紙怎樣報道政治糗聞。表二呈現了 卡方檢測結果。總體上，當地和國際報紙比國內報紙更頻繁地報道政 治糗聞。具體來看，當地報紙（22.64%）和國內報紙（22.22%）比國際報 紙（10.33%）對事實錯誤型糗聞的報道更頻繁（X^2 = 6.56, df = 2, p < .05）。另一方面，國際報紙（19.02%）比當地（5.66%）和國內報紙 （14.82%）對「話筒門」糗聞的報道更頻繁（X^2= 14.89, df = 2, p < .01）。

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表二　政治糗聞類型與報紙類型的關係

	當地	全國	國際	X^2
斷章取義型糗聞	4 (3.77%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.26%)	1.13
敘述失當型糗聞	39 (36.79%)	9 (33.33%)	68 36.96%)	2.99
事實錯誤型糗聞	24 (22.64%)	6 (22.22%)	19 (10.33%)	6.56*
金斯利糗聞	32 (30.19%)	8 (29.63%)	56 (30.43%)	1.47
話筒門糗聞	6 (5.66%)	4 (14.82%)	35 (19.02%)	14.89**
肢體表現類糗聞	1 (0.90%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.78

註:$df = 2$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

　　研究問題三探索政治糗聞類型與文章特徵(即報道基調、報道立場、支持出糗人的理由)之間的關係。一系列卡方分析顯示,「金斯利」糗聞和「話筒門」糗聞的頻率受文章特徵的顯著影響:就報道基調而言,報道金斯利糗聞的文章過半採用負面基調(60.4%),而比較少採用平衡(38.5%)或正面基調(1.0%)($X^2 = 9.04$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$);報道「話筒門」糗聞的文章也較常使用負面基調(68.9%),較少採用平衡基調(31.1%),完全沒有採用正面基調(0.0%)($X^2 = 7.76$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$)。就報道立場而言,報道金斯利糗聞的文章大多數不支持糗聞者(59.4%),抱中立(39.6%)和支持立場(1.0%)的佔少數($X^2 = 9.58$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$);報道「話筒門」糗聞的文章也大多不支持糗聞者(66.7%),持中立態度的佔少數(33.3%),沒有一篇抱有支持糗聞者的立場(0.0%)($X^2 = 6.41$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$)。支持出糗人的理由與糗聞類型的頻次之間並無顯著性差異。

表三　政治糗聞類型與文章特徵的關係

	文章基調			
	負面	平衡	正面	X^2
斷章取義型糗聞	4 (40.0%)	4 (40.0%)	2 (20.0%)	5.96
敘述失當型糗聞	64 (55.2%)	47 (40.5%)	5 (4.3%)	.94
事實錯誤型糗聞	21 (42.9%)	25 (51.0%)	3 (6.1%)	2.63
金斯利糗聞	58 (60.4%)	37 (38.5%)	1 (1.0%)	9.04*
話筒門糗聞	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)	0 (0.0%)	7.76*
肢體表現類糗聞	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	.91
	文章立場			
	不支持	中立	支持	X^2
斷章取義型糗聞	4 (40.0%)	4 (40.0%)	2 (20.0%)	4.21
敘述失當型糗聞	63 (54.3%)	48 (41.4%)	5 (4.3%)	1.16
事實錯誤型糗聞	23 (16.9%)	21 (42.9%)	5 (10.2%)	3.02
金斯利糗聞	57 (59.4%)	38 (39.6%)	1 (1.0%)	9.58**
話筒門糗聞	30 (66.7%)	15 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6.41*
肢體表現類糗聞	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	.89

註：$df = 2$; $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$

　　研究問題四考察最普遍政治糗聞類型與候選人身份之間的關係（見表四）。卡方分析顯示，候選人比在位者的糗聞更多。具體地講，在位者和候選人的敘述失當型糗聞、事實錯誤型糗聞和金斯利糗聞的頻次顯著不同：候選人（88.8%）的敘述失當型糗聞遠高於在位者（11.2%）（$X^2 = 19.14$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$）；候選人（61.2%）的事實錯誤型糗聞也遠高於在位者（38.8%）（$X^2 = 13.09$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$）；候選人（94.8%）的金斯利糗聞亦遠高於在位者（5.2%）（$X^2 = 31.26$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$）。然而，在位者和候選人在斷章取義型糗聞，「話筒門」糗聞和肢體表現類糗聞上的頻次差異並不顯著。

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表四　政治糗聞類型與政客身份的關係

	在位者	候選人	x^2
斷章取義型糗聞	3 (30.0%)	7 (70.0%)	.53
敘述失當型糗聞	13 (11.2%)	103 (88.8%)	19.14**
事實錯誤型糗聞	19 (38.8%)	30 (61.2%)	13.09**
金斯利糗聞	5 (5.2%)	91 (94.8%)	31.26**
話筒門糗聞	9 (20.0%)	36 (80.0%)	.03
肢體表現類糗聞	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	.27

註:$df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

　　研究問題五考察最普遍的政治糗聞類型與候選人黨派之間的關係。如表五所示,民主黨和共和黨政客最常出現的都是敘述失當型糗聞。一系列卡方分析顯示,兩黨政客的糗聞類型在頻次上有顯著不同:民主黨政客(55.2%)的金斯利糗聞略多於共和黨政客(44.8%)(x^2 = 6.65, df = 1, $p < .01$);共和黨政客(90.0%)的斷章取義型糗聞顯著高於民主黨政客(10.0%)(x^2 = 5.63, df = 1, $p < .05$);並且,共和黨(80.0%)的「話筒門」糗聞也比民主黨(20.0%)多得多(x^2 = 16.82, df = 1, $p < .01$)。

表五　政治糗聞類型與出糗者黨派的關係

	民主黨	共和黨	x^2
斷章取義型糗聞	1 (10.0%)	9 (90.0%)	5.63*
敘述失當型糗聞	60 (51.7%)	56 (48.3%)	3.94
事實錯誤型糗聞	19 (38.8%)	30 (61.2%)	1.55
金斯利糗聞	53 (55.2%)	43 (44.8%)	6.65**
話筒門糗聞	9 (20.0%)	36 (80.0%)	16.82**
肢體表現類糗聞	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.17

註:$df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

　　研究問題六考察的是政治糗聞的類型和糗聞的期望違背類型之間的關係。一系列卡方分析發現,斷章取義型糗聞、敘述失當型糗聞和「話筒門」糗聞與糗聞的期望違背類型之間有顯著關係(見表六)。具體

而言，一致性違背的斷章取義型糗聞（70.0%）遠比不一致性違背（30.0%）多（x^2 = 4.85, df = 1, p < .05）；一致性違背的「話筒門」糗聞（68.9%）也遠比不一致性違背（31.1%）多（x^2 = 25.77, df = 1, p < .01）；而不一致性違背的敘述失當型糗聞（55.2%）則遠高於一致性違背（44.8%）的情境（x^2 = 8.18, df = 1, p < .01）。

表六　政治糗聞類型與糗聞的期望違背一致性的關係

	一致	不一致	x^2
斷章取義型糗聞	7 (70.0%)	3 (30.0%)	4.85*
敘述失當型糗聞	52 (44.8%)	64 (55.2%)	8.18**
事實錯誤型糗聞	16 (32.7%)	33 (67.3%)	.62
金斯利糗聞	40 (41.7%)	56 (58.3%)	1.72
話筒門糗聞	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)	25.77**
肢體表現類糗聞	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	.60

註：df = 1; *p < .05, **p < .01

　　研究問題七探索政治糗聞的期望違背類型與文章特徵之間的關係。表七呈現的卡方分析結果顯示，總體上，各項文章特徵（包括報道基調、報道立場、支持出糗人的理由）在期望違背類型上都有顯著性差異。就文章基調而言，報道一致性糗聞的文章（9.1%）採用的正面基調高於報道不一致性糗聞的文章（1.8%）；而平衡基調則正相反；報道不一致性糗聞的文章（62.1%）採用的負面基調高於報道一致性糗聞的（46.8%）文章（x^2 = 11.61, df = 2, p < .01）。就報道立場而言，報道一致性糗聞的文章對出糗者所持的支持立場（10.6%）和反對立場（60.6%）都遠高於報道不一致性糗聞的文章（支持立場為2.7%，不支持立場為48.6%）；相反，報道不一致性糗聞（48.6%）的文章對出糗者採取的中間立場遠高於報道一致性糗聞文章（28.8%）（x^2 = 9.65, df = 2, p < .01）。另外，報道一致性糗聞的文章（27.3%）比報道不一致性糗聞（9.9%）文章更傾向於為出糗人作合理解釋（x^2 = 9.11, df = 1, p < .01）。

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表七　文章特徵與糗聞的期望違背一致性的關係

	一致	不一致	x^2
文章基調			11.61**[a]
正面	6 (9.1%)	2 (1.8%)	
平衡	19 (28.8%)	57 (51.4%)	
負面	41 (62.1%)	52 (46.8%)	
文章立場			9.65**[a]
支持	7 (10.6%)	3 (2.7%)	
中立	19 (28.8%)	54 (48.6%)	
不支持	40 (60.6%)	54 (48.6%)	
支持出糗人的理由			9.11**[b]
有	18 (27.3%)	11 (9.9%)	
無	48 (72.7%)	100 (90.1%)	

註：[a]$df = 2$; [b]$df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

討論

　　本研究提出了政治糗聞的分類方法，並分析了美國報紙對美國總統與副總統候選人的政治糗聞的報道情況。這不僅僅是對政治糗聞的初步探索，也是從新聞報道的角度考察政治糗聞的基準性研究。由於所有提出的政治糗聞的類別都在大選報道的樣本中得到了體現，可見本文前半部分提出的分類是比較恰當的。此研究還表明，根據期望違背理論，每種糗聞都可以按照其期望違背類型，被進一步分為一致性糗聞或不一致性糗聞兩類。

　　研究結果顯示，報紙對政治糗聞的呈現方式受報紙類型和候選人政治立場的顯著影響。從整體上來説，敘述失當型糗聞和金斯利糗聞最常見於對總統或副總統候選人的報道中，且在位者與候選人出現這兩類糗聞的報道頻次顯著不同。候選人比在位者更容易出現敘述失當型糗聞、金斯利糗聞和事實錯誤型糗聞。在報紙用賽馬般激烈的氛圍渲染競選時，政治糗聞往往會通過一種勝負角逐的敘事話語被構建出來。由於在位者通常已經有一定的黨派或公眾支持，候選者要異軍突

起，需要將對手置於一種負面敘事之中，通過大量負面敘述攻擊對手或對手所在政黨，使其顯得像個異類，才能使得選民轉而投向自己的陣營。這種對對手的惡意攻擊通常都會含有不實言論。加之同在位者相比，候選人的政治經驗相對不足，因此新手候選人在陳述不實信息時所犯的口誤也更多。

此外，普遍而言，儘管報刊文章中的事實錯誤型糗聞和「話筒門」糗聞少而敘述失當型糗聞和金斯利糗聞多，但糗聞的具體呈現方式還是受報紙類型的顯著影響。當地報紙較常報道事實錯誤型糗聞，而國際報紙則較常報道「話筒門」糗聞。或許因為這兩類糗聞都具有明顯的轟動效應，也有可能因為「話筒門」糗聞本來就是國際話題，比如奧巴馬曾被媒體捕捉到說自己連任後將在國際問題上有更大發揮空間（Keilar, 2012）。這些糗聞類型可能更吸引國際讀者。有趣的是，事實錯誤型糗聞和「話筒門」糗聞都極少出現在全國性報紙上。然而，就政治糗聞報道引發的政治後果而言，對事實錯誤型糗聞和「話筒門」糗聞的報道可能足以迫使政客為他們的行為「買單」，而其他類型糗聞則可能是煽情有餘而殺傷力不足。

本文的研究結果還反映了不同類型的報刊對差異性和新聞價值的判斷問題。一般來說，當地報刊更多關注當天具體性的政治問題，而國際報刊關注的則是更寬泛並且嚴重的問題。這樣看的話，當地報紙會頻繁報道只影響候選人形象的事實錯誤型糗聞，國際報紙則對此缺乏興趣，而將洩露的信息或許與政黨或國家機密有關的「話筒門」糗聞視為更嚴重的問題。這表明地方、全國與國際性報刊所秉承的新聞價值的判斷標準並不相同。雖然此次內容分析的範圍有限，不足以證明這一推斷，但依舊能夠說明不同報刊類型的新聞價值判斷是未來一個值得研究的方向。

另外，此研究結果還表明，糗聞的期望違背類型與文章特徵，如報道基調、報道立場和是否提供支持出糗人的理由等因素密切相關。對一致性糗聞的報道更常採用正面基調，且為出糗者的行為作合理解釋；而對不一致性糗聞的報道則傾向於採用負面或平衡的基調，且不常為出糗者的行為提供合理化的努力。這些結果支持了期望違背理論

的觀點。當讀者的預期被違背時，他們會給違背人以負面或正面的評價（Afifi & Burgoon, 2000; Burgoon & Hale, 1988）。一致性的政治糗聞只是既有政治觀點的極端表達，而不一致性政治糗聞則與政客的現有政治立場截然相反。考慮到這一點，就不難理解為何一致性政治糗聞與文章的積極基調相關，而不一致性糗聞則與負面基調相關的原因了。

侷限性

本文的研究結論應該被慎重闡釋。首先，此研究只著眼於2000年以來報刊文章對總統和副總統候選人政治糗聞的報道。剛剛結束的2016美國大選糗聞之多，規範違背尺度之大，都可能和這些結果大相徑庭。此外，即便樣本包含了國際報刊，分析對象也僅限於美國候選人的糗聞。此外，雖然電視新聞或有線電視新聞網也有大量關於政治糗聞的報道，但本研究並未將這些樣本收錄在內。並且雖然我們分析了三類報刊（地方性、全國性和國際性的），卻忽略了可能影響糗聞用途的其他媒體類型，比如主流報刊和娛樂小報等。因此，研究結果也許並不能推衍至所有媒體類型對大選活動和政治糗聞的報道。

其次，研究數據的抽樣時間範圍有限。本研究關注的只是近12年間的總統大選。雖然對政治糗聞的關注近年來才開始有所增加，但政治糗聞這一現象本身卻已經以各種各樣的形式存在了很長時間。因此，本研究的結果還有待於採用更長時間跨度的歷時性研究來做重複性檢驗，亦可在非總統大選的背景下研究糗聞以獲得不同的結果。

總結

政客和政治候選人都力求維護其精心營造的政治形象。這些形象在顧問、幕僚和撰稿人的打磨下趨於完美，而對這個完美無暇形象的任何偏離都會產生糗聞。類似於總統競選這樣的大型政治選舉往往動輒經年累月，漫長的週期使得政治糗聞已經成為政客及大選新聞的常客。我們需要研究糗聞，因為「最具新聞價值的（也是最值得關注的）

異常性事件，就是那些候選人在精心籌劃的表演中偏移、出醜、失控、或暴露困窘的瞬間」(Bennett, 1981, p.310)。

因此，未來的研究應關注不同類型政治糗聞的影響，研究媒體對糗聞的過度關注如何影響公眾對新聞媒體和政治候選人的觀點與認知。與此同時，亦可以擴大內容分析的時間範圍，以測定糗聞類型是否具有歷時性的變化特徵。隨著時間的推移，或許糗聞報道會愈發關注非實質性的問題，2016年的美國總統大選便閃現出這種跡象。此外，未來研究應當探索政治糗聞如何產生、以及公眾何以會對這些本質上微不足道的政客失語失態著迷不已？畢竟，這些無足輕重的瑣事一經大眾媒體的放大，不但會成為新聞焦點、影響政治競選的結果，更在一定程度上，決定了誰能夠領導國家的未來。

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More than a Mistake: The Role of Political Gaffes in U.S. Presidential Election Coverage

Shuhua ZHOU, Lindsey Conlin MAXWELL, Yeojin KIM, Zhou SHAN

Coverage of political campaigns and elected politicians dominates 24-hour news networks, as well as nightly newscasts, newspapers, and the Internet. Every word, gesture, and action of prominent political figures is scrutinized and criticized, and small—even trivial—events can become major news stories. These gaffes abound. In this election circle, for example, flamboyant Republic candidate Donald Trump clearly had no idea what a nuclear triad was during a December debate, so he dodged the question, and when pressed again, he managed to say that "I think, for me, nuclear is just the power, the devastation is very important to me" (Berney, 2015). Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton promised to help ex-convicts to enhance their employment chances by preventing employers from including a check box to check criminal history, saying that "I will take steps to ban the box so former presidents won't have to declare their criminal history at the very start of the hiring process" (Davis, 2015). She meant "prisoners", not "presidents", of course, as we have not yet heard former presidents applying for jobs, though her husband, on the other hand, was impeached by the House. These small mistakes by politicians are commonly known as political gaffes (Amira, 2012; Bennett, 1981; Chait, 2012; Linkins, 2012; Obeidallah, 2012; Vicary, 2012), and the coverage they receive can transform a momentary lapse in judgment into an international incident. In today's social media world, a tiny mistake can become a viral video or a meme that explodes in popularity (Vicary, 2012). Today, gaffes have come to occupy a central place in American politics (Amira, 2012).

When presidential hopeful Howard Dean let out an awkward scream after the 2004 Iowa caucuses, for example, the video of him doing so spread across the Internet and local television stations, as well as 24-hour cable news networks (Kaiser, 2012). This momentary mistake, or gaffe, cost Dean his bid for the White House (Kaiser, 2012), even though it was not representative of his policy, character, or any other relevant political

issues. Modern media observers have speculated that while the average political enthusiast may cringe at the thought of a gaffe defining the course of major political events, gaffes do shape how the voting public thinks about politicians; the unpopular opinion is that political gaffes matter (Cillizza, 2012).

In order to have a full understanding of political gaffes, several different branches of literature need to be built upon and combined. These include interpersonal research on gaffes which uses expectancy violations theory to account for its origin and potential effects; news research on deviance which explains the potential newsworthiness of gaffes; and political science research to understand how gaffes can be a detriment to a politician's carefully crafted public image.

Previous communication research on deviance in politics has largely focused on political scandals, and a thorough discussion and typology of gaffes is lacking. Scandals and gaffes warrant two different areas of study, as gaffes do not involve the ethical problems associated with scandals. This study will provide a definition for and typography of political gaffes, as well as a comprehensive, historical content analysis on how media outlets have treated political gaffes over four recent presidential elections in the U.S.

Political Gaffes

A gaffe is a momentary or temporary misstep which results in a socially awkward situation. Political gaffes, in particular, can occur when a politician or political candidate says or does something unexpected, uncouth, or politically incorrect. Earlier research (Gonzales, Pederson, Manning, & Wetter, 1990) discussed gaffes in terms of face-to-face interaction, which stated that gaffes, or face-threatening acts, occurred "when norms or role-based expectations are violated or when untoward acts are intentionally or unintentionally committed" (Gonzales et al., 1990, p. 610). This line of research on gaffes has primarily focused on interpersonal interaction that takes place after one person in a situation commits a gaffe (Gonzales et al., 1990; Gonzales, Kovera, Sullivan, & Chanley, 1995). The unspoken assertion is that gaffes naturally have negative social effects (Jones & Davis, 1965), and that people who witness a gaffe "are likely to make negative assumptions about the social identity of the offender, that is, to

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draw unflattering correspondent inferences" (Gonzales et al., 1990, p. 611). However, interpersonal research does not account for the elements of mass communication and politics that take political gaffes from a mistake between two people to an event that takes place in front of millions and shapes public opinion. During the 2012 presidential elections, Mitt Romney told wealthy donors gathered at a private fundraiser that he could never win over a group of voters who paid no taxes, who were dependent upon the government and who believed that they were victims and who believed the government had a responsibility to care for them. The gaffe was recorded and leaked may have cost Romney the election; audiences who saw the video believed that Romney's gaffe meant he was not in touch with the general public (Good, 2013). Bennett (1981) offered two levels of meaning involved in the communication process surrounding political gaffes:

> First, gaffes become campaign issues when they can be defined plausibly in terms of general norms about leadership and democratic accountability. At this level of meaning, specific incidents are symbolized as general political norms. At a second level, however, the evolution of a gaffe sequence generates information about the specific incident which becomes the basis for practical judgments about the candidate (Bennett, 1981, p. 312).

The implication is that a political gaffe is not only a simple mistake, but that because of its occurrence, judgments and conclusions may be drawn—deservedly or not—about the political candidate who has committed the gaffe, as well as the political process itself.

One primary trait that distinguishes a political gaffe from other political phenomenon, such as a political scandal, is that a gaffe involves a relatively trivial occurrence that does not represent any moral or ethical problem, and is not generally reflective of the character or overall political stance of the person who commits the gaffe. Speaking of a particular incident, one political observer opined that "the episode is a perfect gaffe precisely because its content was so meaningless" (Chait, 2012, para. 5). The process of taking a relatively meaningless incident and turning it into a news story that can shape the course of a political campaign is one of the reasons why understanding political gaffes is so important.

In a time where a momentary, trivial gaffe can become a huge problem

for a politician, it is important to understand the different types of gaffes that can occur. A political gaffe can end up as a viral video which can spread through traditional media outlets and social media. In the past, traditional outlets may not have had time to devote to covering a trivial gaffe (Cillizza, 2012). However, because of the prevalence of social media today, what was once seen as trivial must now be addressed by the media and the politicians themselves if the issue spreads throughout social media outlets such as YouTube or Twitter.

In addition, gaffes have the potential to become major news stories because of the pace of political campaigns and the speed with which mass communication occurs, though this does not necessarily mean that a single incident is as important as the gaffes that were committed before the rise of the viral-video dominated political world (Chait, 2012). It may have been possible that a single gaffe was more important when a handful of print reporters and the big three networks set the media agenda (Chait, 2012). In the past, reporters and news producers had limited time and resources with which to gather and disseminate news, and therefore may have treated political gaffes completely differently, while still recognizing their relevance to the political process, as well as the public's interest in political gaffes.

Observers of modern politics have noted that the average citizen is not happy with the role that gaffes play in the political process (Linkins, 2012). Not only are voters disappointed that a simple gaffe can become a major political issue, some have denied the importance of gaffes, and asserted that such mistakes are unimportant to the political process (Linkins, 2012). Conversely, some more astute political observers believe that denying the importance of gaffes is a failure to recognize the omnipresence of media where even the smallest comment can be amplified into a national headline (Cillizza, 2012). This is not to say that gaffes—in an ideal world—should not play a role in political decision making, but that in the current political climate, to ignore the importance of gaffes would be to ignore an integral issue within the political process. The voting public uses what they see in the press to make political decisions, and because gaffes become large, prominent media events, they are not "easily dismissed as a trivial preoccupations of a frustrated press and a bored public" (Bennett, 1981, p. 310).

On the other hand, politicians painstakingly craft their public images as part of the political process, which is known as "image politics"

(Gackowski, 2013). A politician's depiction in the media is a central part of his or her campaign, particularly because "the main substance of political communication is an image—media representation" (Gackowski, 2013, p. 52). Political images consist not only of the individual's actions and opinions, but on their appearance (Rosenberg, Kahn, & Tran, 1991). Political images are essential to a politician's success, as "in the era of television politics, ever greater attention is being paid to the images political candidates project and the possible impact they may have on electoral outcomes" (Rosenberg et al., 1991, p. 345).

The images created by political candidates may not be faithful representations of the actual personality or character of the individual. These tailored images are made for massive press coverage, and must not be strayed from. If there is any departure from a politician's polished image, a gaffe may result. In major elections, the image presented to the public by a politician is one that the general public expects to see the candidate maintain, and "candidates are permitted a remarkable degree of freedom to contrive their personae and then are held accountable for the faithful portrayal of those characters" (Bennett, 1981, p. 312). The accountability for a public image is how gaffes occur; once the public sees an individual stray from their image, audience members may begin to question other aspects of the politician's platform and character. In sum, a gaffe can be critical to a campaign when it tears apart the well-crafted image created during an election season (Kaiser, 2012).

Deviance and Newsworthiness of Political Gaffes

The idea of deviance in news centers on the premise that when an event deviates from what is normal or socially acceptable, it becomes newsworthy (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997; Shoemaker, Chang, & Brendlinger, 1987; Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991). Deviance is the degree to which an incident deviates—or diverges—from what is normal. By definition, a gaffe is a deviation from the expected, and therefore the occurrence of a gaffe is newsworthy. A deviant event is one that is less likely to occur, and gaffes fall outside of the pre-planned, perfected routines and images that politicians are supposed to adhere to. In this sense, gaffes are newsworthy because they represent a deviance from political norms and

a deviance from the polished images that politicians want to portray (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997).

Research on deviance and newsworthiness has identified three types of deviance that exist: normative deviance, statistical deviance, and potential for social change deviance (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997; Shoemaker et al., 1987; Shoemaker et al., 1991). Relevant to political gaffes is normative deviance, which deals with "the extent to which behavior violates formal norms" (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997, p. 51). Gaffes violate the norms that are associated with politics in general, and in particular, violate the norms of the political images portrayed by politicians. Because gaffes are incidents that are high in deviance, they are newsworthy, and events of high deviance and high social significance usually receive more prominent coverage (Shoemaker et al., 1991). This accounts for the great amount of coverage and attention that gaffes receive in the world of political news coverage. The norms that are expected of politicians are to maintain a polished image that represents politically correct opinions, as well as the larger ideology of the party that they are associated with. These are the "formal norms" that Pritchard and Hughes (1997) spoke of, and any change from these standards constitutes normative deviance.

Additionally, deviance may explain why the voting public uses the information they learn from gaffes to make political decisions. Deviant events are cognitively processed more deeply and remembered better than non-deviant events (Shoemaker et al., 1991). The implication is that gaffes may be more important to the cognitive processing—and decision-making—of political events. In addition, political campaigns and events can become defined by the gaffes (or lack of gaffes) that occur during them. If a gaffe does not occur during a presidential debate, it is sometimes described as lackluster or uninteresting (Bennett 1981).

Gaffes as Expectancy Violations

When a politician deviates from social norms and commits a gaffe, the politician is violating what is expected of him or her. The detrimental effect of deviation from norms can be explained partly by the expectancy violations theory (EVT) which discusses the idea that when—during the communication process—expectations are violated, the receiver of

information makes a judgment (positive or negative) about the person who committed the violation (Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Afifi & Burgoon, 2000). In this case, a gaffe is an expectancy violation. Two primary concepts are involved in EVT: expectations, and violations (Burgoon, 1993). Expectations are defined as the societal norms that an individual expects the people that he or she is communicating with to conform to, or "an enduring pattern of anticipated behavior" (Burgoon, 1993, p. 31). Violations are acts that deviate from what is expected (Burgoon, 1993). Therefore, an expectancy violation occurs when one of the communicators deviates from the expected norms either verbally or physically, resulting in some type of societal awkwardness or unexpectedness (Burgoon, 1993).

In the case of gaffes, the expectations of politicians by the public are that they adhere to a well-defined public identity—known as a political image—in which the politician only speaks politically correct opinions and policies that have been laid out by advisors and consultants. By definition, a gaffe is a deviation from this political image and therefore a violation of what the public expects of a politician. According to EVT, because of the expectancy violation, the public may make a negative assessment of any politician who commits a violation or gaffe (Burgoon, 1993).

In their discussion of EVT, Afifi and Burgoon (2000) identified two types of violations: congruent and incongruent. Congruent violations are "a significantly more ardent or intense behavioral display of a previously enacted emotion, relational message, or persuasive stance" (Afifi & Burgoon 2000, p. 208). Incongruent violations are the opposite; they occur when an individual says or does something that goes against what the individual has previously represented. The range of expectancies and violations can be conceptualized as a spectrum, in which congruent acts are on one end, expected acts are in the middle, and incongruent acts are on the opposing end (Afifi & Burgoon, 2000). Moreover, congruent violations should make it easier for an individual to make a judgment about the person who commits the violation (Afifi & Burgoon, 2000). In the case of political gaffes, this means that even though a gaffe has been committed, it may reinforce the previously held beliefs of the public, and not simply create a negative reaction. What one person sees as a gaffe, another may see as a positive reinforcement of a characteristic of the politician.

Types of Gaffes

Research on political gaffes has been sporadic, even though the importance of gaffes in the political arena has been increasing. The purpose of the current study is to provide a typology of political gaffes, and determine whether this typology is relevant in news coverage of political campaigns. In addition to congruent and incongruent violations, gaffes may repeatedly occur in specific ways that are relevant to mass communication. Due to the complicated nature of political gaffes and political communication in general, a specific instance of a gaffe may fall into more than one of the following categories. Through a semi-inductive process, the following types of gaffes have been identified in popular communication outlets (Amira, 2012) and previous research, and have been examined and combined here for a better understanding of political gaffes as a whole.

The out-of-context gaffe: This type of gaffe is defined by a statement or action by a politician that is misunderstood by the public, and taken out of context (Amira, 2012; Reston, 2012). The statement involved in an out-of-context gaffe is meant to be understood in a different way than how it is interpreted by the public. An example of this type of gaffe would be Mitt Romney saying that he likes to be able to fire people (Madison, 2012). In this situation, Romney was describing how he liked a free-market environment, but the statement alone about firing people made him seem cruel and out-of-touch with the current economy (Reston, 2012).

The narrative gaffe: A narrative gaffe can be created by the opposing party when a politician does or says something that plays into the negative narrative that the opposition has constructed (Amira, 2012). For example, when then-Senator Obama stated that he wanted to "spread the wealth around" (Gewargis, 2008, para. 17), it played into the narrative created by his opposition that he had socialist views. The narrative gaffe provides fodder for the opposing party's negative narrative about the gaffer.

The factual error gaffe: This type of gaffe occurs when a politician makes a statement that is obviously and wholly untrue (Amira, 2012). Factual error gaffes generally occur when the politician is unaware that what he or she is saying is not true. An example of a factual error gaffe would be Sarah Palin stating that Paul Revere warned the British that they would not be able to take guns from Americans (Malcolm, 2011). Palin's statement was blatantly wrong, and it made her seem foolish and ignorant of history.

The Kinsley gaffe: One of the more popular and well-documented forms of gaffes, the Kinsley gaffe—identified by journalist Michael Kinsley—is colloquially defined as when "a politician tells the truth-some obvious truth he isn't supposed to say." A Kinsley gaffe occurs when a politician speaks about the truth that he or she believes about the world, which is not necessarily the truth (Chait, 2012). An example of a Kinsley gaffe could Joe Biden stating in 2014 that there hasn't been a lot of hope and change since 2008, a backbone promise of the 2008 Obama/Biden campaign (Whittington, 2014). This statement revealed that Biden believes he has not delivered on his own campaign promises, a truth that contradicts the position of the Obama administration.

The open-mic gaffe: When a politician is recorded saying something while he or she is unaware of the recording, an open-mic gaffe can occur (Amira, 2012; Obeidallah, 2012; Stephy, 2012). The most famous of these occurred in 1984 when Ronald Reagan was recorded saying of Russia that "we start bombing in five minutes." The resulting panic caused an international incident during the Cold War, and this event is still mentioned in the discussions of political gaffes (Stephy, 2012).

The physical gaffe: The physical gaffe, perhaps the most trivial of the types of gaffes, results from a physical error, such as a person tripping or making a strange sound. Physical gaffes can also include odd facial expressions and momentary lapses in decorum. Examples include Howard Dean's career-ending excitement after Iowa causes in 2004 (Kaiser, 2012), and Fidel Castro's fall in front of an audience, also in 2004 (Newman & Labott, 2004). A physical gaffe may also include an error in etiquette.

Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study is to provide not only a typology of gaffes, but to better understand how political gaffes are covered by news outlets. This will allow researchers to determine whether the proposed typology fits with actual news coverage. In order to make assessments about how political gaffes are represented by news outlets, the current study content analyzed characteristics of news coverage of political gaffes. By characteristics, we mean whether the stories are kinder to some gaffers and meaner to others (such as tone of coverage, supportive or not of gaffers), in

terms of gaffes, in terms of gaffers' status and party affiliations. Because different types of political gaffes may be considered more important, interesting, or newsworthy, they may be covered differently by news organizations. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

*RQ*1: What types of political gaffes are most prevalent in news coverage?

*RQ*2: How do different types of newspapers (local, national, international) cover political gaffes?

*RQ*3: What are the relationships between type of political gaffes and article characteristics?

Because of different levels of political experience between incumbents and candidates who are newly running for office, different types of politicians may commit different types of gaffes. Additionally, a candidate's party affiliation may affect the way that news outlets choose to cover political gaffes. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

*RQ*4: What are the most prevalent types of political gaffes by candidate's status?

*RQ*5: What are the most prevalent types of political gaffes by candidate's party affiliation?

According to EVT, any violation of expected norms in communication can result in a gaffe. In regards to mass communication, any gaffe—or violation—committed by a politician can be either congruent or incongruent (Affifi & Burgoon, 2000). Congruent gaffes are defined as gaffes that reinforce an extreme belief or position of a candidate, whereas incongruent gaffes are defined as gaffes which occur because a politician does or says something that is the opposite of what is expected (Affifi & Burgoon, 2000). Because the congruency of a gaffe may result in different types of coverage by news outlets—congruent gaffes may be treated with less shock and surprise, whereas incongruent gaffes are seen as astonishing—the following research question is proposed:

*RQ*6: What are the relationships between types of political gaffes and congruency?

>   *RQ*7: What are the relationships between congruency of political
>   gaffes and article characteristics?

Method

Population and Sample

In order to answer the research questions proposed above, newspaper articles about the twelve presidential and vice-presidential candidates from four election cycles in the United States were content analyzed. The population of this study is each newspaper articles that covers a political gaffe by U.S. presidential and vice-presidential candidates from the two major political parties in four election cycles, from 2000 to 2012. This resulted in twelve U.S. leading presidential and vice-presidential candidates. These candidates were Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, John Kerry, John Edwards, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, John McCain, Sarah Palin, Mitt Romney, and Paul Ryan. The unit of analysis is each newspaper article on a political gaffe committed by each of the candidates identified in the sample. Newspaper articles were selected for analysis in order to have specific records over a large span of time, which would not have been possible with television content or some other forms of mass media content. Researchers collected newspaper articles related to each candidate's political gaffes covered by newspapers within and outside of the United States. The dates of the election cycles included two years before each election. For example, articles from November, 2010 through November, 2012 were analyzed for the 2012 election cycle. This was done to ensure that the full election cycle was analyzed, even the early primaries. All of the newspaper articles were chosen through an electronic database search in Lexis-Nexis using twelve key words of the each candidate's name with the word "gaffe" (e.g. Obama gaffe or Romney gaffe). After collecting the newspaper articles, researchers deleted unrelated articles to political gaffes, or articles that were about more than one political gaffe (these articles were often general stories about "gaffe-prone Joe Biden" rather than coverage of specific incidences of gaffes). Additionally, articles were excluded if they simply referred to a candidate as "gaffe prone" and did not discuss a specific incident. As a result, a total of 177 articles were analyzed.

Coding Scheme

Type of newspaper: Type of newspaper relates to where the newspaper the article contained in was published. Three types of newspapers were examined: local, national (within U.S.), or international (outside of U.S.).

Article characteristics: Article characteristics were classified into three sub-categories; tone of article, support for gaffer, and rationalizing for gaffer. This was to account for the different treatments certain media outlets might give to the gaffers, depending on the gaffers' and/or the newspapers' political orientations. Without going too much into the literature on biased coverage of politics (see Rosenstiel et al., 2012), the current research seeks to account for the ways certain articles lean one way or another. The tone of article was coded for <u>tone of the article</u> in relation to the specific politician being analyzed or politics in general. The options were positive, balanced, or negative. An article may have been skeptical or dismissive about politics or the politician, indicating that it would be coded as a negative tone. If the article is positive towards the politician and another actor or towards politics in general, it was coded as positive. However, an article was only coded as positive when coders are absolutely sure. Whenever in doubt or the decision is ambiguous, the article was coded as neutral. The <u>support for gaffer</u> variable was coded for how the newspaper article refers to the gaffer. Each article could be supportive, neutral, or unsupportive. If the article was supportive of the individual, it was coded as supportive. The <u>rationalizing for gaffer</u> variable was coded for whether the newspaper article rationalized or attempted to explain why the gaffe was committed. Only yes or no options were included in this category. If the newspaper article tried to rationalize or explain why the gaffe was committed, it was coded as yes.

Status of candidate: The status of each candidate was coded as <u>incumbent</u> or <u>candidate</u> for how the individual was running within the presidential election cycle at the time of the gaffe. For example, if the individual was currently a governor but was running for president, and the gaffe occurred as a result of the election campaign, it was coded as <u>candidate</u>.

Party affiliation of candidate: Party affiliation of candidate was coded as Democrat or Republican for which party the individual was associated with at the time of the gaffe.

Type of political gaffe: For type of political gaffe, the definitions of different types of political gaffes described earlier in this study were used, as identified by various sources in the literature review. As a result, six types of political gaffes were coded: <u>the out-of-context gaffe, the narrative gaffe, the factual error gaffe, the Kinsley gaffe, the open-mic gaffe, and the physical gaffe</u>. This variable was coded as a binary, where each type of gaffe was either present or not present in the article.

Congruency of political gaffe: Based on the definition of congruent vs. incongruent violations by Afifi and Burgoon (2000), political gaffes ere also categorized as either <u>congruent</u> or <u>incongruent</u>. A gaffe was coded as congruent if the gaffe was a variation of expectations, while a gaffe was coded as incongruent if it was the opposite of expectations.

Coder training and intercoder reliability: Before testing intercoder reliability, two graduate student coders were trained during several sessions to understand the coding categories and coding procedures. For the intercoder reliability test, the coders individually analyzed 27 newspaper articles (15% of the sample). Intercoder reliability was measured using Cohen's Kappa. As a result, for all the main variables used in this study, the agreement was as follows; Type of newspaper, 1.000; Article characteristics (Tone of article, .834; Support for gaffer, .820; and rationalizing for gaffer, 1.000), Status of candidate, .926; Party affiliation of candidate, 1.000; Type of political gaffe (the out-of-context gaffe, .780; the narrative gaffe, .690; the factual error gaffe, 1.000; the Kinsley gaffe, 1.000; the open-mic gaffe, 1.000; and the physical gaffe, 1.000), and congruency of political gaffe, 1.000. The overall average reliability was .920 using Cohen's Kappa, with a range from .687 to 1.000. Intercoder reliability was generally high with the only exception on narrative gaffes, perhaps a function that context information was needed on the part of the coder to understand whether an oppopent narrative was in existence.

Results

RQ1 asked about the most prevalent kinds of political gaffe. As shown in Table 1, a descriptive analysis reveals the appearance of different types of gaffes within the sample. Apparently, the most prevalent are narrative gaffes, Kinsley gaffes, factual error gaffes and open-mic gaffes, while physical gaffes and out-of-context gaffes are the least prevalent.

The Role of Political Gaffes in U.S. Presidential Election Coverage

Table 1 Types of Political Gaffes

	Total (%)
Out-of-context gaffe	10 (5.6%)
Narrative gaffe	116 (65.5%)
Factual error gaffe	49 (27.7%)
Kinsley gaffe	96 (54.2%)
Open-mic gaffe	45 (25.4%)
Physical gaffe	1 (0.6%)

Note: Gaffes are not mutually exclusive.

RQ2 explored how different types of newspapers cover political gaffes. A series of chi-square analyses are represented in Table 2. Overall, local and international newspapers tend to cover political gaffes more frequently than national newspapers, just by looking at the sheer number of stories. Specifically, local newspapers (22.64%) and national newspapers (22.22%) were more likely to cover factual error gaffes than their international (10.33.8%) counterparts ($X^2 = 6.56$, *df* = 2, *p* < .05). On the other hand, international newspaper (19.02%) were more likely to cover open-mic gaffes than local (5.66%) and national (14.82%) counterparts ($X^2 = 14.89$, *df* = 2, *p* < .001).

Table 2 Types of Gaffes Covered by Newspapers

	Local	National	International	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	4 (3.77%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.26%)	1.13
Narrative gaffe	39 (36.79%)	9 (33.33%)	68 36.96%)	2.99
Factual error gaffe	24 (22.64%)	6 (22.22%)	19 (10.33%)	6.56*
Kinsley gaffe	32 (30.19%)	8 (29.63%)	56 (30.43%)	1.47
Open-mic gaffe	6 (5.66%)	4 (14.82%)	35 (19.02%)	14.89**
Physical gaffe	1 (0.90%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.78

Note: *df* = 2; *p* < .05, **p* < .01

RQ3 explored the relationships between type of political gaffes and article characteristics (i.e. tone, support for gaffer, and rationalizing for gaffer). A series of chi-square analyses showed statistical significance in the Kinsley gaffe and the open-mic gaffe categories. For tone of newspaper

articles, articles with a negative tone (60.4%) were more related to Kinsley gaffes than those with a balanced tone (38.5%) or a positive tone (1.0%) (X^2= 9.04, *df* = 2, *p* < .05). Articles with a negative tone (68.9%) were also more related to open-mic gaffes than those with a balanced tone (31.1%) or a positive tone (0.0%) (X^2= 7.76, *df* = 2, *p* < .05). For support for gaffer, articles that were unsupportive towards the gaffer (59.4%) were more related to Kinsley gaffes than those with a neutral tone (39.6%) or a supportive tone (1.0%) for gaffer (X^2 = 9.58, *df* = 2, *p* < .01). Articles with an unsupportive tone for gaffer (66.7%) were also more related to open-mic gaffes than those with a neutral tone (33.3%) or a supportive tone (0.0%) for gaffer (X^2= 6.41, *df* = 2, *p* < .05). However, no statistically significant difference was found in the relationship between political gaffes and rationalizing for gaffer.

Table 3   Relationship between Type of Political Gaffes and Article Characteristics

	Tone			
	Negative	**Balanced**	**Positive**	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	4 (40.0%)	4 (40.0%)	2 (20.0%)	5.96
Narrative gaffe	64 (55.2%)	47 (40.5%)	5 (4.3%)	.94
Factual error gaffe	21 (42.9%)	25 (51.0%)	3 (6.1%)	2.63
Kinsley gaffe	58 (60.4%)	37 (38.5%)	1 (1.0%)	9.04*
Open-mic gaffe	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)	0 (0.0%)	7.76*
Physical gaffe	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	.91
	Support for gaffer			
	Unsupportive	**Neutral**	**Supportive**	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	4 (40.0%)	4 (40.0%)	2 (20.0%)	4.21
Narrative gaffe	63 (54.3%)	48 (41.4%)	5 (4.3%)	1.16
Factual error gaffe	23 (16.9%)	21 (42.9%)	5 (10.2%)	3.02
Kinsley gaffe	57 (59.4%)	38 (39.6%)	1 (1.0%)	9.58**
Open-mic gaffe	30 (66.7%)	15 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6.41*
Physical gaffe	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	.89

Note: *df* = 2; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01

RQ4 explored the most prevalent types of political gaffes by the politician's status. A series of chi-square analyses were employed (see Table 4). Results showed that candidates tended to commit more political gaffes than incumbents. In particular, statistically significant differences in the narrative gaffe, the factual error gaffe, and the Kinsley gaffe between incumbents and candidates were found. Specifically, candidates (88.8%) were more likely to commit narrative gaffes than incumbents (11.2%) $X^2 = 19.14$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). Candidates (61.2%) were also more likely to commit factual error gaffes than incumbents (38.8%) ($X^2 = 13.09$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). Similarly, candidates (94.8%) were also more likely to commit Kinsley gaffes than incumbents (5.2%) ($X^2 = 31.26$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). However, no statistical significant difference was found in the out-of-context gaffe, the open-mic gaffe, and the physical gaffe between candidates and incumbents.

Table 4 Types of Gaffes by Politician's Status

	Incumbent	Candidate	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	3 (30.0%)	7 (70.0%)	.53
Narrative gaffe	13 (11.2%)	103 (88.8%)	19.14**
Factual error gaffe	19 (38.8%)	30 (61.2%)	13.09**
Kinsley gaffe	5 (5.2%)	91 (94.8%)	31.26**
Open-mic gaffe	9 (20.0%)	36 (80.0%)	.03
Physical gaffe	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	.27

Note: $df = 1$; $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$

RQ5 explored the most prevalent types of political gaffes by candidate's party affiliation. As shown in Table 5, both Democrats and Republicans tend to commit narrative gaffes the most frequently. A series of chi-square analyses revealed statistical differences in political gaffes between Democrats and Republicans. Democrats (55.2%) committed more Kinsley gaffes than Republicans (44.8%) ($X^2 = 6.65$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). In contrast, Republicans (90.0%) committed more out-of-context gaffes than Democrats (10.0%) ($X^2 = 5.63$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). Further, Republicans (80.0%) committed more open-mic gaffes than Democrats (20.0%) ($X^2 = 16.82$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

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Table 5 Types of Gaffes by Party Affiliation

	Democrat	Republican	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	1 (10.0%)	9 (90.0%)	5.63*
Narrative gaffe	60 (51.7%)	56 (48.3%)	3.94
Factual error gaffe	19 (38.8%)	30 (61.2%)	1.55
Kinsley gaffe	53 (55.2%)	43 (44.8%)	6.65**
Open-mic gaffe	9 (20.0%)	36 (80.0%)	16.82**
Physical gaffe	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.17

Note: $df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

RQ6 asked about the relationships between types of political gaffes and its congruency. A series of chi-square analyses showed statistical significance in the out-of-context gaffe, the narrative gaffe, and the open-mic gaffe (see Table 6). Specifically, more articles on congruent political gaffes (70.0%) demonstrated out-of-context gaffes than those on incongruent gaffes (30.0%) ($X^2 = 4.85$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). In the same vein, more articles on congruent political gaffes (68.9%) demonstrated open-mic gaffes than those on incongruent gaffes (31.1%) ($X^2 = 25.77$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). In contrast, more articles on incongruent political gaffes (55.2%) demonstrated narrative gaffes than those on congruent gaffes (44.8%) ($X^2 = 8.18$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

Table 6 Relationship between Type of Political Gaffes and Congruency of Gaffes

	Congruent	Incongruent	X^2
Out-of-context gaffe	7 (70.0%)	3 (30.0%)	4.85*
Narrative gaffe	52 (44.8%)	64 (55.2%)	8.18**
Factual error gaffe	16 (32.7%)	33 (67.3%)	.62
Kinsley gaffe	40 (41.7%)	56 (58.3%)	1.72
Open-mic gaffe	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)	25.77**
Physical gaffe	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	.60

Note: $df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

RQ7 asked about the relationships between congruency of political gaffes and article characteristics. A series of chi-square analyses were presented in Table 7. Overall, statistical significances were found in all of the article characteristics including tone of articles, support for gaffer, and rationalizing for gaffer. For tone of newspaper articles, those focusing on congruent political gaffes (9.1%) are more likely to have a positive tone than those on incongruent gaffes (1.8%). But it was the other way around for balanced tone. Incongruent political gaffes (62.1%) also tended to receive a more negative tone than their congruent counterparts (46.8%) ($X^2 = $ 11.61, $df = 2$, $p < .01$). As for support for gaffer, more articles on congruent political gaffes (10.6%) demonstrated support for gaffers than those on incongruent gaffes (2.7%). Similarly, more articles on congruent political gaffes (60.6%) demonstrated unsupportive tone for gaffers than those on incongruent gaffes (48.6%). On the contrary, more articles on incongruent political gaffes (48.6%) were either neutral than congruent counterparts (28.8%) ($X^2 = 9.65$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$). Further, more congruent political gaffes (27.3%) than incongruent gaffes (9.9%) received rationalizing ($X^2 = 9.11$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

Table 7   Article Characteristics by Congruency of Gaffes

	Congruent	Incongruent	X^2
Tone			11.61**[a]
Positive	6 (9.1%)	2 (1.8%)	
Balanced	19 (28.8%)	57 (51.4%)	
Negative	41 (62.1%)	52 (46.8%)	
Support for gaffer			9.65**[a]
Supportive	7 (10.6%)	3 (2.7%)	
Neutral	19 (28.8%)	54 (48.6%)	
Unsupportive	40 (60.6%)	54 (48.6%)	
Rationalizing for gaffer			9.11**[b]
Yes	18 (27.3%)	11 (9.9%)	
No	48 (72.7%)	100 (90.1%)	

Note: [a] $df = 2$; [b] $df = 1$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Discussion

This study proposed a typology of political gaffes, and then proceeded to examine how political gaffes of U.S. presidential and vice-presidential candidates were covered in newspapers. This is the initial step to a better understanding of political gaffes, and provides a baseline look at how political gaffes are treated by the news media. The typology proposed earlier in this study is appropriate for classifying political gaffes, as all of the proposed categories of political gaffes were represented in the sample of stories about presidential candidates. This research additionally shows that each type of gaffe can be represented as congruent or incongruent, in line with EVT.

The findings revealed that the representation of attributes of a political gaffe varied according to the type of newspaper and the candidate's political stance. Specifically, the overall findings showed that narrative gaffes and Kinsley gaffes were most commonly found in newspaper coverage of presidential or vice-presidential candidates, and that the difference in those two types of gaffes was significant between incumbents and candidates. Candidates seeking election to office were more likely than incumbents to commit narrative gaffes, Kinsley gaffes, and factual error gaffes. In the context of horse race coverage in newspapers, political gaffes tend to be employed in order to create a narrative about how one candidate is winning or losing. Compared to incumbents who already had a base of party support or at least experienced public's support, candidates may be more likely to use negative narratives to alienate incumbents and to attract potential voters. By using a narrative that attacks their opponent or the opponent's party, candidates may be attempting to draw attention to their political stance and/or reinforce existing political narratives. In the same vein, candidates who are more politically inexperienced than incumbents may make more slips of the tongue by stating untrue information.

Additionally, although factual error gaffes and open-mic gaffes were less commonly found in newspaper articles than narrative gaffes and Kinsley gaffes, the findings of this study revealed that different types of newspapers covered different types of gaffes, indicating that factual error gaffes prevalently appeared in local newspapers, while open-mic gaffes were the most common in international newspapers, probably for their obvious sensational values. This result may also be due to situations like

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President Obama's open-mic gaffe which was about an international topic, where he was caught saying that he would have more freedom on international issues after his re-election (Keilar, 2012). These types of gaffes may be more appealing to an international audience. Interestingly, both factual error and open-mic gaffes were the least prevalent in national newspapers, in part due to the less dramatic nature (factual gaffes) and less frequent occurrence (open-mic gaffes) of these gaffes. However, in terms of the actual accountability for politicians that results from the coverage of political gaffes, coverage of factual error gaffes or open-mic gaffes may have the power to hold politicians accountable for their actions, rather than simply contributing to the empty sensationalism that surrounds some other types of gaffes.

These findings may also reflect different deviance and newsworthiness valued by different types of newspapers. In general, local newspapers focus on very specific political issues occurring in their region, while international newspapers value more general, but serious issues. In this respect, factual error gaffes that affect only the candidate's image may be frequently covered in local newspapers, but may not be covered in international ones. In contrast, open-mic gaffes can be recognized as being more serious issues because some of the information revealed in open-mic gaffes can be related to the party or state secrets. This suggests a difference in news values between local, national, and international newspapers. While this content analysis is limited in scope, these findings suggest that news value to different types of newspapers is an important issue for further investigation.

Furthermore, the findings in this study showed that the congruency of gaffes were related to article characteristics, such as tone, support for gaffer, and rationalizing for gaffer. Congruent gaffes were associated with a more positive tone, more support and more rationalization for the gaffer, while incongruent gaffes tended to be treated with more negativity or balance in terms of tone, and less support for the gaffer. These findings support the idea of expectancy violation. Readers judge the person who committed the violation in positive or negative way when their expectation is violated (Afifi & Burgoon, 2000; Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Congruent political gaffes are just more extreme versions of a political view, while incongruent political gaffes are the opposite of the politician's existing political stance. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that congruent political gaffes are associated with positive article tone, while

incongruent political gaffes are associated with negative article tone.

Limitations

These findings should be viewed with caution. First, this study focused only on newspaper articles about political gaffes from presidential and vice-presidential candidates since 2000. Also, gaffes seemed to be rampant during the 2016 election, whose results and deviance with may be different from the current study. Additionally, while the sample included international newspapers, the gaffes analyzed were only committed by U.S. candidates. There was also no analysis conducted on television stories or stories that appeared on cable news, where many discussions of political gaffes may take place. Further, although we focused on three types of newspapers—local, national, or international—other types of newspapers that may influence use of gaffes such as mainstream newspapers and tabloids were overlooked. Thus, the findings may not be directly generalizable to all types of media coverage of political campaigns and political gaffes.

Second, the data is limited by the time frame in which it was collected—specifically looking at presidential elections in a 12-year span. Although attention to political gaffes has recently increased, political gaffes may have arisen in various forms long before. In this regard, these findings must be replicated with longitudinal data. Additionally, gaffes may be examined outside the context of a presidential election to garner varying results.

Conclusions

Politicians and political candidates maintain carefully-shaped images, polished to perfection by advisors, scriptwriters and consultants. Any deviation from this flawlessly cultivated image can result in a gaffe. Political gaffes have become part of the routine surrounding politicians and elections; large political campaigns—such as presidential campaigns—can last for many months, and even years. The study of gaffes is important because "the most newsworthy (and perhaps the most noteworthy) departures from electoral routine are those occasions when candidates blunder, lose control, or otherwise create embarrassing flaws in their

carefully staged performances" (Bennett, 1981, p. 310).

Future research should focus on the effects of different types of political gaffes, or how the excessive coverage of gaffes shapes political opinions or perceptions of news outlets and political candidates themselves. An interesting study may also result from expanding the time frame for a content analysis to determine whether types of gaffes have changed over time; coverage of gaffes may focus on less substantive issues with the progression of time. The 2016 election may be the case. Additionally, future research should examine why political gaffes take place, and why the public is fascinated with these temporary, trivial blunders that become huge media sensations, shaping not only the outcome of a specific political campaign, but the future of the leadership of the country.

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